



## Social Justice Council Minutes

9-6-07

Mike Benefiel, co-chair, opened the meeting and suggested the group work with the following covenants:

1. Honor each other's time – begin at 7:30 pm and end at 9:00 pm, keep comments short
2. Practice nonviolent communications – listen attentively, speak into silence, ask clarifying questions with compassion and respect
3. Seek justice in community

Leslie Kee, Cedar Lane's ministerial intern shared an opening reading and members introduced themselves.

### 1. **Montgomery County Task Force on Mentoring**—John Smith

Mike Benefiel introduced John Smith, a Cedar Lane member and President of the Montgomery County Task Force on Mentoring <http://www.mentor-me.org>. He is interested in involving other Cedar Lane members in this mentoring program.

- Focuses on supporting middle and high school students to help them with Academic improvement, Behavior improvement, and Contribution to community (ABC).
- School-based program (no communication between mentor and student outside of school), typically built around activities on a theme.
- Taskforce provides training.
- Commitment is once a week for one hour during school hours, or after school.
- Mike will be back in touch with John about next steps related to recruiting mentors.

### 2. **Action in Montgomery (AIM)**--Helen Strang

- Cedar Lane is a founding member of AIM
- Annual contribution of about \$10,000 per year (1% of congregation budget)
- Four people on Core Team from CLUUC, would be good to have more people (not a big time commitment)
- September 25, meeting at CLUUC committed to 4 people  
October 18, meeting Kehilat Shalom  
9915 Apple Ridge Rd., Gaithersburg, MD 20886
- committed 40 people
- A lot of work on affordable housing

### 3. **Treasurer's Report**--Connie Nissley

- Distributed budget report that included last year's budget
- Office would like to have a budget for the \$21,675 allocated to SJC

- Some commitments exist already—agreement with AIM. Other organizations may have been receiving regular donations and may expect them again.
  - The committee agreed to discuss this further at the retreat.
  - Questions were raised about whether funds from June meeting had been allocated as decided. Connie will check.
4. **LGBT Task Force--Marge Dimond**
    - LGBT task force doing strategic planning
    - Seem to be moving toward continuing advocacy work, updating Welcoming Congregation status including more education on trans-gender issues, working with youth groups, doing more social activities.
    - October is LGBT history month. Exhibit planned.
    - Forum being set up with Executive Director of Equality Maryland
    - Anticipating decision from MD Supreme Court re marriage equality
    - Yamamoto Gift Fund is for LGBT activities
  5. **Environmental / Green Sanctuary Report—Mike Benefiel, Connie Nissley, Betsy Devlin-Foltz**
    - Green-in, Sat. Oct. 20, 3pm-9pm
    - Task force meeting Sunday 9/9 at 12:15
    - Lots of help needed
    - Connie will let EFT know that SJC prepared to receive a request for funds to support Green-In
  6. **Board of Trustees report—Karen Lerner**
    - Board discussed and approved digital screen for front of church
    - Resurrection of denominational affairs committee
    - Upcoming service to honor Dick Darne as Director of Music Ministries
    - Overall church goal to focus on the environment per Spring Board congregational meeting
  7. **Martha's Table—Karen Lerner**
    - Welcomes help, will be recruiting more people beginning Sunday
    - CLUUC offers to reimburse members for expensive contributions to Martha's Table. SJC agreed to continue this policy.
  8. **MCCAW (Montgomery County Coalition Against War--includes Peace Action)—Deborah Vollmer**
    - Meets at CLUUC every 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of month
    - Activities include meetings with elected representatives, candidate forums, lobbying, counter-recruitment efforts
    - Next meeting September 26 meeting at 7:30 in CLUUC (Room 1&2)
    - Anti-war demonstration on September 15
  9. **UUSJ—Pat Karlsen**

- September 29 meeting at Rockville UU Church will include a roundtable for Social Justice chairs, UU Minister talk on spiritual underpinnings of Social Justice.
- Meeting sponsored by JPD October 27 Fairfax.

**10. Beacon House--** Marion Carlson

- Have done well this year collecting schools supplies
- More welcome, will be delivering them after this Sunday
- We have given money to Beacon House in the past, mostly through individual donations.
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**11. SJC Strategic Planning Retreat—**Betsy Devlin-Foltz

- September 22 10am-3pm in Chalice House
- Members invited to review proposed agenda and contact Mike or Helen with suggestions
- Mike floated the idea that the role of SJC is to provide focus and herd the social justice cats?!

**Process Observations, Closing Words--**Heather Janules

- The meeting had both loose and tight properties—structure and creativity, joie de vivre
- Closed with a reading by Gordon McKeeman

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Devlin-Foltz, secretary

In attendance:

Michael Benefiel, co-chair

Helen Strang, co-chair

Betsy Devlin-Foltz, secretary

Connie Nissley, treasurer

Heather Janules, minister for pastoral care

Karen Lerner, Board of Trustees liaison to SJC

Leslie Kee, intern minister

Deborah Vollmer

Marion Carlson

Marge Dimond, co-chair of LGBT task force

Pat Karlsen, co-chair of UUSJ Joseph Priestly District

Scott Neuner

Kay Scott

Sandy Shaw

John Smith

