

**Social Justice Council Monthly Meeting
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church
Meeting Minutes, April 2, 2009
7:30 - 9:30pm**

Present: Betsy Devlin-Foltz, Sandy Shaw, Marge Dimond, Helen Strang, Annette Scarpitta, Connie Nissley, Nancy Janssen, Pam Gehrke, Pat Karlsen, Heather Janules, Ann Suydam

The meeting was called to order at 7:30. We enjoyed readings by Heather and Sandy.

Nominations

Nancy Janssen who had chaired the Nominations Committee reported that the following Cedar Laners have agreed to serve on the Social Justice Council: Mike Burski, Kay Gottesman, Ann Suydam, and Anne Thompson. They will be elected at the Congregational Meeting on April 19. The council thanked Nancy for her stellar leadership in managing the nominations process and expressed appreciation to Ann Suydam for attending the meeting.

Pat reminded us that we still need to choose a UUSJ representative by May. Sandy agreed to work with Pat on identifying someone who can represent the congregation at four UUSJ board meetings per year (two are conference calls) and Maryland cluster meeting. Pat encouraged council members to consider attending the meeting in Annapolis on Saturday, April 4, that will include workshops.

Primary Care Coalition

Sandy responded to an appeal to Cedar Lane from this organization that provides health care services to low-income residents of the community. He recommended and the council agreed that it be one of the recipients of an upcoming 50/50 collection.

Healthcare for All

The Social Justice Council agreed to support the new Maryland Health Care for All Act of 2009 www.healthcareforall.com

Community Based Shelter

Cedar Lane has volunteered to serve at the Community Based Shelter the week of September 6-12, in addition to our regular week in January (not confirmed yet).

Action in Montgomery (AIM) Trainings

Helen shared information about training being offered by AIM that will take place at Cedar Lane this spring. Some aspects of the training will focus on AIM issues. The skills that will be the focus of the May trainings can be used for other kinds of organizing as well and AIM is willing to make the training more generic to meet these needs if there is interest.

Thursday, 4/30 7-9pm (AIM Focused)

County Power Analysis

Break-out by issue area: Housing, Youth/Education, Safety Net

Organizing Training, Part 1, Tuesday 5/5 or Thursday 5/7, 7-9pm (can be more generic)

New Member Track: Orientation to AIM and community organizing

Advanced Track: Power Analysis: how to do one, to help you better organize your congregation

Organizing Training, Part 2, Tuesday 5/19 or Thursday 5/21, 7-9pm (can be more generic)

New Member Track: Individual meetings

Advanced Track: Activities of a leader

Issue Incubator: Abolishing the Death Penalty

Betsy suggested that SJC provide an “Issue Incubator” meeting to follow up on Pam’s moving sermon the previous week. It was scheduled for Tuesday, May 12 at 7:30. SJC will provide:

- A space for a first meeting on Tuesday, May 12 at 7:30pm
- Spiritual support (Pam will be there!)
- Facilitation for the meeting
- Snacks!

The goal of the meeting will be to decide whether this is a good time for Cedar Lane to do more on this issue and if so, what the first step would be. SJC will not be offering to take the issue on, but will support emerging leadership after the meeting with advice, communication opportunities, seed funding, etc. The meeting might also lead to a decision that it is not the right time for Cedar Lane to do more on this. Betsy, Sandy, and Pam will be at the meeting. Others are welcome.

Big SJ Event

Betsy shared some preliminary ideas for a big event that she has been discussing with Val Carter since the Empowerment Workshop—sort of a Green-In on a broader range of SJ issues. It could include a service component, table displays about volunteer and service learning opportunities, and other fun and inspiring activities. Heather and Annette offered to help with the planning. The council discussed advantages and disadvantages of a fall vs. spring event and reached no resolution. Heather will get some ideas about available times at the calendar meeting next week.

Communications

The council applauded Helen’s excellent work on the annual report. Nancy J passed around the lounge lizards schedule (please contact her and offer to lizard!) and Betsy urged people to use the listserv (aka Social Justice Bulletin.)

Task Force Committee Updates

Anti Racism Task Force: Heather announced the launch of the new anti-racism task force that will begin meeting twice a month in the spring/summer as a result of classes, a fall service, and follow-up focus groups on the topic.

International Concerns Coalition: Annette described the impressive work of this energized group. They have written a charter and drawn up a budget and plan to use technology and events to inspire and involve Cedar Laners in addressing global issues. She expressed concern that because she is leaving SJC there won’t be a voice for these issues on the council and asked that members keep her informed. The council expressed its support of

the work of the Coalition and noted that needs of people in developing countries are particularly acute during this economic crisis. Other ideas discussed for raising the profile of global issues: having a the international concerns coalition send a different member to SJC meetings each month, inviting a sermon on why we should care for those in need outside our community, newsletter items etc.

LGBT Task Force: Marge shared upcoming events, announcements and advocacy opportunities.

- The Youth Summit on Sat April 18 is shaping up to be a very large and exciting event for which adult volunteer help is needed. Please contact Archene at aturner@cedarlane.org if you can help.
- Family Film Night is scheduled for Sat May 16 6:30-9:00
- Please check the Social Justice Listserv for information about how to support some important bills in the Maryland legislature.
- There are hopeful signs on the federal level regarding the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy, defense of marriage act, employment non-discrimination act, and hate crimes legislation.
- Sweden legalized gay marriage yesterday!

2009-2010 SJC Budget

Treasurer Connie Nissley had circulated a draft budget in advance of the meeting. Some adjustments were made and the total figure that will be requested of the Board is higher than last year. Connie will note in her request that SJC is requesting more in order to respond to the increased interest in social justice in the congregation and because of increased need in times of economic crisis.

Heather shared a closing reading, proving yet again, her flexibility and creativity on short notice and meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30.