

Minutes
Social Justice Council at Cedar Lane
Thursday, April 3, 2008, from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

In attendance: Mike Benefiel, Helen Strang (co-chairs), Connie Nissley (treasurer), Betsy Devlin-Foltz (secretary), Kay Scott, Karen Lerner (board liaison), Deborah Vollmer, Heather Janules (ministerial liaison), Marge Dimond, Pat Karlsen, Annette Scarpitta.

The meeting was opened with a chalice lighting, a moment of silence, followed by a request that everyone share what they would like from the meeting.

1. Five styles of conflict

Mike Benefiel shared information about five styles of managing conflict and their relative impact on nurturing relationship vs. achievement of goals

- avoiding (low relationship, low achievement)
- accommodating (high relationship, low achievement)
- competing (high achievement, low relationship)
- compromise (mid on both)
- collaborate (high relationship, high achievement)

2. Task Force Updates

The bulk of the meeting was to be devoted to discussing plans for next year, so task force reports were brief. Two important updates were shared from the task forces:

- LGBT Task Force—Marge Dimond reported that the performance by the Lesbian and Gay Chorus on April 6 has been cancelled for lack of ticket sales.
- The McCaw Anti-war group—Deborah Vollmer reported that despite her outreach efforts no one else attended the most recent meeting. She shared her frustration at not being able to involve more Cedar Laners in her efforts. Later in the meeting, she noted the importance of recognizing that Cedar Lane continues to offer free meeting space and reasonable use of copy machine to McCaw, though a specific line item is not in the current draft budget for Peace activities next year.

3. Current Budget Matters

After a brief discussion, SJC decided not to reduce the amount designated for SJC (\$1,000). Connie will arrange to send the check.

The LGBT Task Force requested allocation of additional funds for the following activities:

- A rental of the table at the Rainbow Families Conference, where Task Force chair, Stephen Colgan will be presenting OWL Out. This would be an opportunity for outreach for the church.
- “In Our Family: Portraits of All Kinds of Families” photo-text exhibit. The usual cost is \$1,000, but the non-profit Family Diversity Projects, is willing to provide the exhibit for any donation because it is in the area already.

SJC voted to move the currently undesignated \$275 to the LGBT budget and encouraged the task force to talk with the Membership Committee about sharing cost of table.

4. Next Year's Budget

The Finance Committee had requested that we provide them with two budget requests for next year: a "bare bones" minimum budget and "blue sky" maximum budget. The amount we receive will be determined after the Pledge Drive on April 13.

Pat Karlsen, Cedar Lane's liaison to UUSJ explained that UUSJ is changing the dues structure to \$5 per person as the old dues structure (approximately \$4 per person) never covered whole program. This would represent an increase to \$4,330 from our current dues. Pat noted that if one counts Cedar Lane's current donation, individual memberships and special gifts, Cedar Lane donated more than this amount for the current year.

Another new expense that is anticipated is \$1,500 for the Social Justice Empowerment workshop (\$1,200 for the facilitators, \$300 for other expenses).

After much discussion, SJC agreed to request the following:

- For the "bare bones" budget, SJC will request \$23,125 which represents this year's budget + \$1,500 for the Social Justice Empowerment Workshop.
- For the "blue sky" budget SJC will request \$24,930. In addition to the \$1,500, this budget includes: 1) an increase to \$4,330 for UUSJ 2) an increase for new initiatives, including one by Heather Janules to start an anti-racism task force as an outgrowth of the Building the World We Dream About class

It was noted that actual line items in the budget would be worked out after we know how much we receive.

5. Social Justice Empowerment Workshop

Though energy was flagging, SJC members made a valiant effort to discuss the most critical items related to submitting an application to the UUA for the Social Justice Empowerment workshop. This process, moderated by facilitators from the UUA is designed "to help social justice leaders and advocates be more strategic, to develop collective decision-making, to make good use of congregational resources, and put our UU faith into action."

The Cedar Lane board has responded positively to the idea of holding this workshop, which will require attendance by the minister(s?), 50% of the board, and 20% of the typical Sunday worship attendance. The application form requires three possible dates. January dates are being proposed, based on the current church calendar. (SJC members agreed to use whatever influence they have to avoid a severe weather event ☺) It also requires signatures of the ministers, board chair, and chair of SJC and three goals for the workshop. The signatures have been secured so it remained to SJC to identify goals.

Helen Strang proposed the following:

- How to make SJ action reflect the wishes of the congregation
- How to involve more people in SJ in the congregation
- Figure out most effect way to organize social justice in church

During the brief discussion that followed the following additions were suggested:

- How to assess what congregation wants
- How to organize SJ to meet needs of congregation;
- How to decide how to allocate funds
- How to ensure that the workshop is not just talk, but leads to action.

Helen, Betsy, and Connie agreed to work on the goals via email and get the application to the UUA.

It was noted that it would make sense to form a planning committee that represents more than SJC but that there would be time to discuss this at the next SJC meeting. Among the tasks to be completed before the workshop are a congregational assessment three months before the workshop (some members have already begun gathering information), recruiting participants, organizing space, meals, childcare etc.

In her process wrap-up, Heather Janules noted that people seemed tired but encouraged members to feel good about the tremendous work SJC is accomplishing this year.

