

**Agenda for Social Justice Council Monthly Meeting
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church, Room 1-2
Thursday, Feb. 7, 2008, from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**Minutes
Cedar Lane Social Justice Council Meeting
Thursday, February 7, 2008**

Mike Benefiel, Connie Nissley, Kay Scott, Karen Lerner, Sandy Shaw, Marge Dimond, Helen Strang, Tillman Neuner, Deborah Vollmer, Betsy Devlin-Foltz, Annette Scarpitta, Rev. Heather Janules.

1. Opening

We opened with a moment of silence inspired by Rev. Roger Fritts sermon on meditation the previous Sunday.

2. Board of Trustees Report

Karen Lerner, SJC liaison to the Board of Trustees indicated that the Board had voted to try the 50/50 sharing of the weekly offering (with exception of checks designated as pledges) with a social justice/service organization on the 4th Sunday of each month. The new initiative will be evaluated in six months. SJC welcomed this initiative of the board and endorsed the recommendation that the first collection, scheduled for February, support the “Owl Out” program to bring the UU Sexuality program to Beacon House. SJC members shared some of their confusion about where this excellent initiative will “live.” Helen Strang agreed to find out the answer to this question. She also agreed, per SJC’s understanding of a request from the board, to approach the Environmental Task Force, Global Task Force, LGBT Task Force and the RE Council to request their top recommendations for organizations to receive the funds and share the criteria they used to determine these priorities.

3. Marriage Equality Lobby Day & other LGBT Activities

The bus is full! Fifty-five people (including 20 youth members from the Cedar Lane and Rockville UU churches) will travel to Annapolis on Monday, February 11. Participants are from Cedar Lane, River Road, Rockville and other UU churches. The costs are currently charged to Mike Benefiel’s credit card. He will ask for reimbursement and expects to break even. Annette Scarpitta’s 7th grade RE class has made wonderful posters on this issue that are in the lounge and may be moved to the hallway display space soon.

In other LGBT news, Marge Dimond reported that the gathering of LGBT Families for Bingo & Movies at Cedar Lane was a big success. It was relaxed and fun and drew about 40 people. On April 6 the Lesbian and Gay Chorus will be coming to Cedar Lane.

4. Community Based Shelter

Sandy Shaw reported that the at least 70 volunteers had put in 175 hours to provide meals for the Community Based Shelter in January. SJC supported this activity with a donation of \$377. Volunteers were particularly responsive to an email request that

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was sent out at the last minute to people who had completed SJC and March 4th surveys. Given the success of the event, Sandy is exploring the possibility of Cedar Lane doing this for a second week (or shorter period of time) as Cedar Lane has done in the past. Times are available in May or the summer.

5. Planning for March 4th evening with Rev. Louise Green, Minister for Social Justice at All Souls, Unitarian

SJC members reviewed a list of questions that Mike Benefiel had collected to share with Rev. Louise Green who has been invited to speak at Cedar Lane. After a brief discussion, members agreed to send edits of the questions to Mike by midnight Feb 12 so he can share them with her. SJC members are urged to invite two Cedar Laners who might be interested in social justice issues to this event. Betsy will make a flier for the lounge lizards table and put announcement on the social justice listserv (if she can solve the technical difficulties) and send a message to Kristin Grassel, membership coordinator, to share with visitors to the church. SJC agreed to offer an honorarium of \$100 to Rev. Green in recognition of her donation of time and talent.

6. March 6 Adult Program on “Organizing for Social Justice”

Alyssa Glassman from AIM will address this issue generally and discuss specific actions in which AIM is currently involved. SJC had previously agreed to ensure a minimum number of participants (we think it's 8). Obviously have more people there is the goal! Members agreed to encourage others to come to the program. A decision on whether SJC should pay the \$5 fee to encourage people to come was not made.

7. Day of Service Task Force

Heather Janules explained that on May 17 Cedar Laners will meet at church for a brief worship service then go out into the community to participate in service projects to thank the community and highlight Cedar Lane. Betsy Devlin-Foltz who is on the task force, distributed a flier and an application form that will be used to publicize and plan for the event. Momentum is building already. The covenant group leaders will team up with an AME church to do a project in Ken Gar (related to AIM). SJC approved \$500 to help defray \$1,500 in costs.

8. Global Task Force

Annette Scarpitta, chair of the task force, requested financial support for the Afghan Dinner in support of Kabultec. Cedar Lane has been working with Nasrine Gross of Kabultec, since before 9/11 and have hosted Afghan dinner for a number of years. A \$200 donation was approved. She will be submitting “Kakenya’s Dream” as the Global Task Force’s choice for the 50/50 plate split. Kakenya Ntaiya’s Enoosaen, a young Kenyan woman who was promised in marriage at age five and managed to fight to get an education instead of leaving school to be married. Currently a student at the University of Pittsburgh, she spoke at a Cedar Lane forum last year and is starting a Leadership Academy for Girls in Kenya.

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9. Peace Activities

Deborah Vollmer reported that there was a demonstration at Lockheed Martin on Martin Luther King Day. The Congressional Candidates Forum drew approximately 50 people. On May 3 Peace Action is hosting a lunch at the Rockville UU from 11:30 to 2pm with speakers.

Mike Benefiel noted that on Friday, March 7 there will be an Interfaith Worship Service at All Souls. UUA leader Bill Sinkford will speak as will Rabbi Bosco from Philadelphia, and representatives of the UU Washington Office for Advocacy. A rally on Mall and civil resistance will take place later in the day.

10. Treasurer's Report

Connie Nissley indicated that a \$10,000 check has been sent to AIM per the approved budget, and that the Environmental Task Force had requested \$60 to cover the cost of lunch for participants in the Rock Creek Clean-up. In discussing the next two items, the board voted to move \$200 to the Global Task Force line item to support Kabultec's work in Afghanistan and set aside \$500 for the Day of Service on May 17.

11. Next meeting moved to March 11

Because "Organizing for Social Justice" is scheduled for the same night as the next SJC meeting, SJC decided to move the meeting to the following Tuesday, March 11 at 7:30pm. Mike suggested we try using a "consent agenda" in which straightforward ideas and topics that don't need discussion are presented together via email for approval at the beginning of the meeting. Any member can request that an item be moved from the "consent agenda" to the "discussion agenda." **Members are encouraged to submit agenda items to Mike by Feb 29.**

Betsy Devlin-Foltz advised that the listserv is having some technical difficulties and that she is exploring options to fix them that might include moving to a different service. Stay tuned.