

Organizing for Social Justice

IN THE

UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

Purposes of the 2006 reorganization:

- to continue and build on the congregation's tradition of social justice education and action
- to adapt social justice structures to the growing size and organizational complexity of the church
- to enhance communication about social justice issues at all levels of congregational life
- to increase accountability of social justice groups and activities to the congregation

Structures provided for in the 2006 reorganization:

Social Justice Task Forces:

- to advocate, educate, organize, and/or inform around a specific area of social justice concern
- to share expertise and information about that specific area of social justice concern with other Task Forces and groups as needed
- to report annually to the congregation

The Social Justice Coordinating Circle:

- to be representative of Social Justice Task Forces and other programming and educational groups (within the church and related to the church) that are dealing with social justice issues as a primary or secondary responsibility
- to facilitate communication and mutual support between and among such groups
- to coordinate annual reporting to the congregation about social justice involvements and activities

The Social Justice Steering Committee:

- to promote social justice involvement on the part of members and friends of the congregation
- to establish and operate communication systems that disseminate information on programs and issues to members and friends of the congregation
- to manage the week-to-week functioning of social justice structures



THE SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATING CIRCLE

The Circle consists of:

- one representative from each of the congregation's Social Justice Task Forces (these representatives may be chairs or co-chairs of their Task Forces or members, but the Task Forces are to send representative persons who are both involved in and informed about the work of their Task Force AND are able to commit time to responsible involvement in the work of the Circle)
- representatives from key bodies in the church, including at least the Religious Education Committee and the Board (the Board-appointed liaison to the Social Justice area)
- liaison persons (one each) from non-church social justice groups deemed to have strong ties within the congregation (MCUM, UUSC, BCADP, 25% recipient, etc.)
- a minister or ministers as assigned by the staff
- two representatives of the Social Justice Steering Committee

The Circle:

- meets at least three times a year (fall, winter, spring)
- reviews Task Force configurations annually
- monitors names of Task Forces for clarity and accuracy
- provides for the orientation of new Task Force leaders
- coordinates Sunday morning "social justice moments"
- coordinates preparation by the Task Forces of written annual reports to the congregation
- coordinates social justice reporting at the annual meeting of the congregation
- selects from its membership annually or on a meeting-to-meeting basis a person or persons to take notes at meetings and to circulate to the full membership of both the Circle and the Steering Committee a summary which shall include decisions made and responsibilities assigned
- selects from its membership at its spring meeting a chairperson to serve a one year term

The Chairperson:

- prepares agenda and program for Coordinating Circle meetings in consultation with the Steering Committee
- presides at meetings of the Coordinating Circle
- serves on (or sends a proxy to) the congregation's Council of Committees



THE SOCIAL JUSTICE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Social Justice Steering Committee consists of:

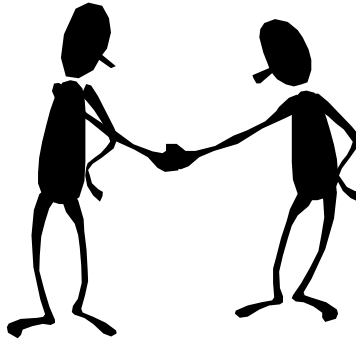
- five members selected from the congregation at large
- the Board-appointed liaison to the Social Justice area
- one member of the Social Justice Funds Committee
- a minister or ministers as assigned by the staff

The Steering Committee:

- meets regularly (once or twice a month)
- carries out “housekeeping chores” such as handling incoming mail concerning social justice issues and programs, responding to requests to the congregation concerning social justice activities, responding to building use requests by outside groups for social justice activities, etc
- participates in the congregation’s annual budgeting process on behalf of social justice, taking into account requests from the Circle and/or Task Forces
- names and oversees the work of a Social Justice Funds Committee which shall manage applications for and award grants from the “3% fund” for social justice causes and shall conduct the process by which potential recipient(s) are recommended to and considered by the Congregation for social justice funding from non-pledged Sunday offering
- allocates current budget Social Justice funds in response to Task Force requests
- approves in consultation with the members of the Coordinating Circle applications from groups within the church for Task Force status
- identifies outside social justice groups that may have liaison members on Social Justice Task Forces and/or the Social Justice Coordinating Circle and establishes policy for how such representation shall be exercised
- supports Task Forces in the process of requesting permission to conduct fund raising events
- coordinates Sunday morning issue forums
- provides means of publicity for social justice activities (*Prologue* insert [*Common Ground*], regular e-mail communication to a “subscription list,” social justice table and bulletin board in Commons, use of church website, etc.)
- selects from its membership annually or on a meeting-to-meeting basis a person or persons to take notes at meetings and to circulate to the full membership of both the Steering Committee and the Circle a summary which shall include decisions made and responsibilities assigned
- selects from its membership at its spring meeting a chairperson to serve a one year term

The Chairperson:

- prepares agenda for Steering Committee meetings in consultation with the Coordinating Circle membership
- presides at meetings of the Steering Committee
- serves on (or sends a proxy to) the congregation’s Council of Committees



RESPONSIBILITIES SHARED BY THE COORDINATING CIRCLE & THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Social Justice Coordinating Circle and the Social Justice Steering Committee shall regularly consult with one another and assign responsibility for:

- program evaluation
- planning, publicizing, and conducting social justice events such as Social Justice Fair, Peace and Justice Sing-Alongs and Pot-Luck Suppers, social justice booth(s) at the holiday craft fair, etc.