



Common Ground

Social Justice Newsletter UU Church Bloomington In

Civil Marriage Task Force says Thanks For Your Support

The Civil Marriage Is A Civil Right Task Force would like to thank the church community for their support. We mailed 570 postcards in support of ENDA, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act! We also sent many cards in support of the Matthew Shepard bill which would extend hate crimes protections to the LGBTQ community. These bills have yet to be voted on but whatever happens we know that **we stood on side of love in speaking out.**

You are making a difference to the civil rights of the GLBT community with your support of our efforts and we thank you.

The task force is in the process of reinventing itself since the defeat of SRJ7. We know that fight is not over but for now we can address other issues important to the LGBT community. Watch for SJ forums and film nights on topics important to the cause. This is a great time to join the task force as we take on this important effort. If you have any ideas of topics we should address or activities we could take

on, join us the second Sunday after second service at 12:30pm. Location is posted in the Order of Service.

*Judi Epp, Chair
Civil Marriage is a Civil Right Task Force*

Coal plant at issue important public hearing - Say no to coal plant, yes to renewable energy

The Green Sanctuary Task Force urges you to attend a public hearing on Duke Energy's proposal to build a new \$2 billion coal plant. The hearing will be in Bloomington, at City Hall in City Council chambers, on Wednesday, August 29th at 6 PM. It is under the auspices of the Indiana Utilities Regulatory Commission, which must approve or reject the plant (and which gives signs of being highly favorable to Duke's request). Vice President Al Gore recently urged people to consider non-violent civil disobedience to block new coal plants, the worst contributors to global warming. The least we can do is show up at a hearing.

David Keppel, Green Sanctuary Task Force

Faith in Action Forums - 10:15 am in the library

August 26 - See the video "**Secrecy in Government**" hosted by Majorie Crosby. Hear about Pentagon papers and the role UUs played.

Social Justice Grant applications available September 1

Applications for grants for social justice projects will be available September 1st. The deadline for applications is October 1st. The approval process includes several steps and we hope to have decisions on all applications following the December 9th Congregational meeting.

At the June congregational meeting the congregation voted to put all the social justice grant funds within the Special Purposes Fund where they will be managed by the Special Purposes Fund Committee. Social Justice Small Grant Fund A will be used to fund grants of up to \$1000.00. Because of the limited amount of money in Fund A at this time, we expect to fund only small grants, if any. Social Justice Large Grant Fund B will be used to fund grants above \$1000.00. We expect that the larger grants will be made only when exceptional projects are proposed.

The resources in these funds are limited and the number of grants and amount of funding available is therefore limited.

Social Justice Fund A - \$ 700.00 Social Justice Fund B - \$8800.00

Projects must be based in Monroe County and be consistent with the mission of our church. Priority will be given to applications from (1) Social Justice Task Forces, (2) projects that involve a significant number of the congregation, and (3) applications to seed new projects that will have an enduring benefit.

If you are planning an application, the time is NOW to begin involving the congregation in your project so that you will be able to state on your application the extent of congregational participation.

On September 1st, applications will be available in the Social Justice mailbox in the work room or electronically from John Woodcock (woodcock@indiana.edu) or Stephanie Estell (nanaysteph@hotmail.com). The committee prefers applications to be filed electronically.

*The Social Justice Funds Committee
Stephanie Estell and John Woodcock co-chairs
Joan Caulton, Jennifer Blankenship, Bob Taylor*

The True Cost of War: A Moral Balance Sheet Sent to members of the United States Congress by Rev. William G. Sinkford, President of the Unitarian Universalist Association March 9, 2007

One Day in Iraq

- To date, more than 3,100 American military members have been killed in Iraq, and another 400 have been killed in Afghanistan. On average, another college-aged soldier (between the ages of 18 and 22) is killed every day.
- The money the US spends on average in just one day in Iraq, \$259 million, could have provided 22,615 college-aged students with a full year's tuition or enrolled 35,500 three- and four-year-olds a full year in Head Start pre-school programs.

One Week in Iraq

- The toll of the war on Iraqi civilians has been devastating. Estimates of the number of Iraqi dead range up to half a million.
- As many as 3.8 million Iraqis have already fled their homes, and an additional 10,500 civilians become refugees on average every week.
- The money spent in one week in Iraq could have provided three meals a day for nearly an entire year for 6 million children, the same number that dies from hunger and malnutrition every year.

Crafting Bridges, a Current SJ Grant Recipient Update

Thanks to the generous support of this wonderful church and the Social Justice Grant we received last winter, Crafting Bridges has taken off!

Crafting Bridges is a collaborative project between the UU Church, New Leaf-New Life, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. Thus far, some volunteers have sewn, washed, and ironed blank pillowcases while other volunteers have worked alongside inmates at the Monroe County Jail to decorate the pillowcases for their children. Inmates eagerly get out the fabric markers and personalize the pillowcases with sweet messages and images that allow them to communicate their love for their children.

Tania Karnofsky, Volunteer Coordinator for New Leaf-New Life shares, "The women clear off their work space and get right to it. When they work on their pillowcases, it is total silence. Usually, it is a mad house. It is amazing!" Crafting Bridges helps inmates to utilize their time in jail for healing and transformation. It allows parents to develop healthy ways of relating to their children and gives the children a chance to feel thought of and loved during this difficult time.

This pillowcase project will continue through 2007, and a new project will soon begin, involving the parents decorating cups for their children to drink from. Many thanks to the UU church for making Crafting Bridges possible! If you are interested in being involved in this fun and meaningful project, please call Christine McKenna at 876-3383. Thanks so much!

*Christine McKenna, Director
Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)*

Just Peace urges you to join vigil to end the Iraq war

The vigil will be on Tuesday, August 28th, from 8 to 8:30 at Sample Gates. It is sponsored by MoveOn and is one of hundreds of vigils taking place simultaneously across the country. Rev. Bill Breeden, Glenda Breeden, and David Keppel will be among the presenters in a program that includes commentary, poetry, and song. The paper dolls made by children in our Religious Education program for the children of Iraq will also be on display. Below is a summary of MoveOn's August 16th press conference.

- MoveOn reports that that the war in Iraq has cost American tax-payers \$456 billion so far.
- It has also cost 3,694 US military fatalities, including 93 Hoosiers. 27,000 Americans have been wounded, many with serious injuries that will change their lives.
- 70,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed, according to the organization Iraq Body Count using extremely conservative methodology, and a study by Johns Hopkins researchers finds that 655,000 Iraqis have died as a result of the invasion and occupation.
- One third of the Iraqi population lacks water, sanitation, food, and shelter. 2 million Iraqis are displaced within Iraq and another 2 million are refugees.
- The U.S. military in Iraq is exhausted. Soldiers keep going with Rip It and Red Bull. Only a third of the regular army's brigades now qualify as combat-ready.
- The United States cannot be the solution in Iraq, because the occupation is the problem. Military operations create more enemies than they destroy. The war is only winning us new enemies throughout the Islamic world and increasing the risk of a new 9-11.
- The solution must be political. No Iraqi government that depends on the United States

will have the credibility to settle the growing civil war in Iraq.

- US troops and contractors must leave Iraq, and we must support truly international mediation and humanitarian assistance, especially for refugees.
- President Bush is fighting on in a hopeless war so he can hand the blame to his successor. Meanwhile, people are dying.
- Congress must take real action to stop the war now. We urge Congressman Baron Hill to support legislation mandating a swift withdrawal. He should refuse to fund anything other than the safe withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, as well as humanitarian assistance.
- We must not let the administration escalate the war into Iran. Congress must pass legislation barring the President from attacking Iran without specific Congressional authorization.

*David Keppel
Task Force on a Just Peace*



Pen Pal Opportunity

There are people on both the federal and state death rows in Indiana who would like to have pen pals in the "outside" world. Our Bloomington Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (BCADP) received two letters this past week from prisoners asking for pen pals.

I have corresponded with a man for over ten years who was on Illinois' death row before Governor Ryan declared a moratorium on executions in 2003; he is now serving a life sentence. It has been a gift for me to get to know this man, his spiritual journey, his struggles within the prison system, and his genuine best wishes and concern for me and my family. And it has been a light in his life to hear stories about my grandson, my garden,

my walks in the woods with the dogs, as well as my ideas about religion, world events, and social action.

You could use BCADP's P.O. Box as your return address, or, if enough people from our congregation are interested, perhaps UUADP could get a P.O. Box of our own for this purpose. See me at church, call me (812-829-3431), or send me an e-mail (breedden@ccrtc.com) if you are interested in learning more about this opportunity.

*Peace, Glenda Breeden
(UUADP Task Force)*

U.S. Scheduled Executions

August

21 – Oklahoma Frank Welch
22 – Texas Johnny Conner
23 – Alabama Luther Williams
28 – Texas DaRoyce Mosley
29 – Texas John Amador
30 – Texas Kenneth Foster

September

05 – Texas Tony Roach
12 – Tennessee Daryl Holton
13 – Texas Joseph Lave
18 – Ohio John Spirko
20 – Texas Clifford Kimmel
25 – Texas Michael Richards
26 – Tennessee Edward Harbison
27 – Texas Carlton Turner
27 – Alabama Tommy Arthur

Common Ground needs co-editor

Common Ground our monthly Social Justice newsletter is looking for a co-editor. Current editor, Jackie Hall, would like to have a partner that can put together some of the newsletters. Microsoft Publisher is the software used. Email jmhall@indiana.edu or 332-6451.