

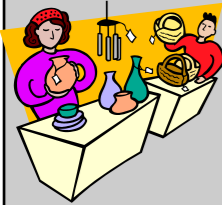


# Common Ground

Social Justice Newsletter UU Church Bloomington In

## Social Justice Coordinating Circle at Bazaar December 5th-6th

Watch for the UU Social Justice presence at the Bazaar! Choose from **Free-Trade to Hand-Made** to help build schools in Africa, provide scholarships for local writing women, support organic/free-trade coffee growers in Mexico, help build a house in Monroe County, and lend a hand to feed our many hungry neighbors. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to share information with the larger community about our diverse task forces and the work we are doing around the world. Bring a friend and stop by our tables—in Fellowship Hall and in the hall at the foot of the stairs.

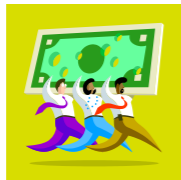


Bazaar 12/5-12/6

~Glenda Breed

## Social Justice Funds Fall Applications

The Social Justice Funds Committee (SJFC) met in October to consider four applications for social justice funds. It was the decision of the committee that none of the applications met the criteria for funding.



The application form begins with the following guidelines:

1. 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.
2. Before submitting the grant proposal,

advocates of the proposal should have taken steps to inform members of the congregation and to involve interested members in the project.

The applications we reviewed this year were not funded for varying reasons. Each applicant has received a letter from the SJFC explaining why the application was not approved.

The SJFC will look closely at the way we inform the congregation about the grant process. We will make sure the guidelines are clear and publicized before an applicant reads the application. This will make it easier for applicants to involve other congregation members before the application deadline. We will publicize a list of projects funded in the past as examples of what we are looking for.

We are confident there are many members of our congregation involved in social justice projects throughout Monroe County which involve a significant number of our congregation, are new projects that will have enduring benefit, and may have the sponsorship of Social Justice Task Forces. Please consider how a financial "boost" or "seed" could benefit your social justice projects or ideas and consider submitting an application next year.

~The Social Justice Funds Committee  
Stephanie Estell and Jennifer Blankenship co-chairs  
Joan Caulton, Jan Neff, Jerry Neff

## Interested in Helping Children?



Are you interested in working on social justice issues that affect children like preventing child abuse or alleviating childhood poverty? A new Children's Taskforce may be forming. Contact Jennifer Livesay if interested, [jennifer.livesay@gmail.com](mailto:jennifer.livesay@gmail.com)

## A Call to Define UUA Statement on Just Peacemaking




What is Just Peacemaking? Every two years, the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association votes to select a social justice study action issue. We are in the concluding phase of one on peacemaking. The culmination of that is a statement reflecting our principles and laying the groundwork for our future social justice work and our response to immediate crises (such as Iraq, Iran, or Russia).

A brief discussion and vote on this issue will be part of our December 14th Congregational Meeting: please read on so you will be prepared.

The Commission on Social Witness (CSW), which is the UUA's social justice committee, has drafted a Statement of Conscience on Just Peacemaking. (To read it, please go to [Http://www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org) and enter "Just Peacemaking" in the search field.) The UUA General Assembly in Salt

Lake City in June 2009 will vote on it, but first there is an opportunity for comment and change. The Commission on Social Witness requires that any comment be endorsed by a congregation; the CSW does not consider responses from individuals or task forces.

 *Vote on the Statement of Conscience on Just Peacemaking at the Congregational Meeting December 14, 4pm*

Unitarian Universalists have a diversity of opinion about war: some of us are pacifists; others accept the doctrine of Just War. The current draft on Just Peacemaking seeks to reconcile these by stressing our work for justice, to reduce the causes of



*Our delegates at GA will vote on behalf of our Congregation*

conflict, and it speaks of international, societal, congregational and interpersonal peacemaking. But it is silent on the acceptable limits to organized violence. I personally feel it

would be such a tragic failure not to address how we can curb armaments and war-making that if the statement is not amended, and if I am a delegate, I will move to reject it completely. (The CSW could then try again next year.)

“The splitting of the atom,” Einstein famously said, “has changed everything save our ways of thinking, and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophes.” An equally important change comes from globalization – in a much broader sense than trade. We live at a time of global communication and ecological fragility. Cooperation has become imperative as never before. Surely these changes require not merely work for justice to prevent war but also sharp limits on militarization in the name of defense.

Liberal religious peacemaking must seize deep realities to challenge self-styled “realism.” At a minimum, the statement should call for:

- the global abolition of weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, chemical, and biological;
- an end to any nation’s right on its own to wage war beyond its borders;
- all cross-border military operations to be done under United Nations command, under international law;



*Should we call for abolition of weapons of mass destruction?*

- an end to the “war on terrorism” and a move to treat terrorists as criminals, subject to law;
- curbs on the arms trade, including in small arms;
- deep cuts in military spending (especially in costly weapons systems and overseas bases, while increasing support for veterans) and redirection of the money to human needs, national and global.

On December 14th our Congregational Meeting will vote on whether to submit these comments to the UUA Commission on Social Witness. Of course, time to discuss this complex subject will be extremely limited on the 14th: essentially we’ll have to vote Yes or No. But before that, there is a chance for deeper discussion.

If you are interested, please join us at an open meeting of the Just Peace Task Force on Sunday, November 30th at 12:45 in the Church library. Thank you for helping this congregation be a voice for peace.

For more information, please contact David Keppel (812) 331-2815 or [keppel@sbcglobal.net](mailto:keppel@sbcglobal.net).



*Does our congregation want to call for an end to any nations right on its own to wage war beyond it’s borders?*

### Help in New Orleans March 14-20th Volunteers Needed



We seek volunteers for another trip during spring

break, March 14-20, 2009. Also, some volunteers willing to put in their time can not afford the expense of the trip (about \$400 for gas, housing, and food), so we seek contributions to the cause. Tax-deductible contributions can be made with checks sent to the church, payable to the UU Church of Bloomington, with “Katrina Relief” in the memo line. For more information, please contact David Parkhurst at 333-2945, or by e-mail, [nola.dfp@comcast.net](mailto:nola.dfp@comcast.net).

*-David Parkhurst, Katrina Taskforce*

### Friends of Prisoners Task Force

\*Many of our friends and members are involved in volunteer work at the Monroe County Jail—making a real difference in the lives of the people incarcerated there. Contact Debra Morrow at [VolunteerNewLeaf@aol.com](mailto:VolunteerNewLeaf@aol.com) if you want to give some time, energy, and expertise to



a program that truly meets the needs of some of the most marginalized people in our community.

They need us—we need them.

\*The first military execution since 1961 is scheduled for December 10<sup>th</sup> at the Federal Prison at Terre Haute. Information about the vigil will be forthcoming.

\*Thank you, thank you, thank you for all the gorgeous fabric you brought to the church for the quilt project at Wabash

Valley Correctional Facility. I will deliver it this week. —*Glenda Breeden*

### Hosts Needed for Singers of United Lands (SOUL) Visit to Bloomington

Singers Of United Lands will be returning to the Bloomington area in late February 2009! The line-up for this unique vocal quartet includes singers from Chile, Kenya, Latvia, and South Korea. The group is seeking Host Families to be provided by members of the Unitarian Universalist church in Bloomington. In 2007 this group made a brief visit to Bloomington with the support of families from the our community.



The request is for each of the 5 young adult members of the team (4 singers and 1 tour manager) to be provided a bedroom and food during a stay in the Bloomington area that would likely be no more than 3 days in duration- (the itinerary should be clearly defined soon). The group will provide day-time programs at schools in the Bloomington area. In return for providing Host Families, the group would offer a program of their native songs at the church. Details of the four singers can be found on our website:

[www.singersofunitedlands.org](http://www.singersofunitedlands.org).

If you would like to volunteer to host one or more of the members of SOUL during their visit to Bloomington please contact Jason Blankenship with the International Outreach Task Force, 765-318-8851, [jasonblank33@yahoo.com](mailto:jasonblank33@yahoo.com).