



Common Ground

Social Justice Newsletter UU Church Bloomington In

or anneveldman@yahoo.com

Wednesday evenings (2/18 & 3/4) 6 – 8 pm St. Thomas Lutheran Church, 3800 East Third Street. Benjamin Schultz 855-5130 or schultzb@indiana.edu

Saturday afternoon (2/21 or 3/7) 1 – 5 pm at St. Thomas Lutheran Church, 3800 East Third Street. Participants in this power version (the full workshop in one session) of the class will need to contact Benjamin Schultz in advance for instructions on information that attendees will need to bring with them to the workshop. 855-5130 or schultzb@indiana.edu

You can also form your own group for participation in a facilitated workshop. The ideal group size is between 10 and 40 people. Earth Care can provide trained facilitators (based on availability) for you group. For more information about this option, call or email Marcia Veldman at 988-4956 or meadowlk@bloomington.in.us

Hearing what others are already doing to

Community Meeting on Jail Expansion, Saturday, January 31

Decarcerate Monroe County (DMC), with the encouragement of Citizens for Effective Justice and the UU Friends of Prisoners Task Force, is pleased to invite you to a **community update and discussion on Monroe County's plan to expand incarceration**. The meeting will be held in the great hall of the Trinity Episcopal Church at 111 S. Grant St, from 3-6pm, childcare provided. Please come to share information and personal stories about incarceration, coordinate efforts to fight the expansion, and begin developing effective, long-term strategies and proposals to reduce incarceration!



reduce their carbon emissions is important and motivating.

It is rewarding to be part of a congregation that is willing and eager to change our daily routines so people here in Bloomington, and on the other side of the planet, can have better lives.

-Marcia Veldman, Green Sanctuary Task Force

Power of Positive Use of Leisure Time

NewLeaf-NewLife has opportunities for volunteers who want to have fun while bringing fun to people released from jail and their families, especially the kids!

Many who get entangled in the criminal justice system spend their leisure time drinking and drugging. They have not experienced the joy of singing in a choir or playing on a softball team. They may not even know the many leisure time activities that are available that often cost little or no money – reading a book, going on a birding trip or simply watching the stars.

If you enjoy an activity and would like to share some of your energy, time and expertise with an inmate in the jail or children waiting on mom or dad to return you may be rewarded with seeing people who have been in jail decide to never return.

To learn more contact Debra Morrow, Volunteer Coordinator: 812-349-2890; volunteernewleaf@aol.com.

-Vid Beldavs, Friends of Prisoners Task Force

Seeking Justice for GLBTQ people

In 1989, officially welcoming gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender people seemed like a radical idea for a church, yet it was something our congregation worked toward and voted on at that time. On Jan. 24th and 25th we will take time to recognize the good work that has occurred and find out what work is needed to make this church and country a just place for GLBTQ people.



For over 20 years we have welcomed homosexual, bi-sexual and transgender people.

Rev. Keith Kron is an excellent speaker who is known for his humor and storytelling. We are blessed to have him with us for this process. Rev. Kron currently works in the Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA) Office of GLBT Concerns. He said this about his workshop:

“Twenty-five years ago people were trying to get more comfortable with gay and lesbian and bisexual people. Today our congregations are trying to more greatly understand transgender issues. We will explore in greater depth what transgender means, why people are choosing to identify as neither male or

female, and why this pushes so many people's buttons- and how we can work for justice for all people. Come with questions and an open mind.”

All are invited to the free workshop Saturday 1/24 from 10am-2pm, childcare provided. Includes a luncheon with a special program recounting the history of the Welcoming Congregation here at UUBC.

Health Care for All: Act Now!

Now is the best opportunity to improve support for the nation's uninsured and for fixing the healthcare system in the United States. Tom Daschle, the new Secretary of Health and Human Services, is asking for your input.

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations passed a resolution to

Social Justice Coordination Circle meets Feb. 1st, 7pm in the library

Free Workshop led by Rev. Keith Kron

When: Sat. Jan. 24th
10am-2pm

Who: Everyone!

Lunch and childcare provided

support the house bill HR676 initiated by Representative John Conyers that expands Medicare for all. Congressman Hill is finding increased support even in southern counties but he needs more encouragement from constituents in order to support of the bill. This bill will be re-instated in the new congress with the same number. Please contact Congressman Hill and show your support for a single payor option.

In a related matter, it has come to the attention of citizen action groups that Senator Bayh's spouse Susan is on the board of Wellpoint, one of the largest for-profit health insurance companies in the country. In addition to a salary, Susan Bayh collects many thousands of dollars in stock options each year. Citizen action groups are set to encourage Senator Bayh to either abstain from voting on health care issues as a matter of conflict of interest or ask that his wife resign from the board of Wellpoint. If this concerns you, tell him.

If you wish to help, please write your legislators to address the misfortune of 46 million Americans who have no health insurance. Numbers of encouraging communications move them. Contact them by phone, letter or E-mail.

-Mary Boutain and Bob Taylor

Katrina Relief Task Force: Help Rebuild New Orleans Homes

The Katrina Relief Task Force recently took 10 volunteers to New Orleans to rebuild damaged houses last September. We car-pooled down, and worked on two homes Monday through Friday. At one we replaced most of the carport roof and mud-

ded drywall. At the other we installed kitchen cabinets and did other tasks. Our week is described in a 10-minute mini-documentary at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6w3C4Mb02Cs>.

We now seek volunteers for another trip during IU's spring break, March 14-21, 2009. Also, some volunteers willing to put in their time can't afford the expense of the trip (about \$350 for gas, housing, and food), so we seek contributions to the cause. Tax-deductible contributions can be made with checks sent to the church, with "Katrina Relief" in the memo line. Information about the Little Farms Church (United Church of Christ) where we were

Habitat For Humanity Breakfast Thanks Volunteers

Thanks to all UUs who purchased food at the Habitat Task Force's fund-raising breakfast on Jan. 18. We netted more than \$600 and all of it, along with funds we've raised previously, will go toward the current Habitat build, which does not have a primary sponsor. The small task force could not have done it without the help of a chalice circle and many folks outside of the committee including; Ann Robins, Mary Blizzard, Ulla Linenthal, Darlene Jolley, Don Halford, Ilona Richey, Dolores Freiburger and George Cusack.

About 18 UUs will participate in the Habitat build on Jan. 24 on the Westside. Thanks to other UUs who are joining task force members in building that day. Your continued support of Habitat's important work in the community is greatly appreciated.



housed, and which has a well-developed rebuilding program, is at <http://www.ucc.org/volunteer/hurricane/>. For further information, please contact David Parkhurst at 333-2945, or by e-mail, nola.dfp@comcast.net.

Cut Your Carbon Workshops

When Sir Francis Bacon wrote "knowledge is power" 4 centuries ago atmospheric carbon dioxide was well under 300 parts per million. Today we live on a rapidly warming planet because we have pushed that level to about 400 ppm.

In February and March, Earth Care, Bloomington's Interfaith Group for the

Environment, will offer four Cut Your Carbon workshops that empower us to reduce our carbon footprints. In these workshops you can learn how to calculate, monitor and reduce your carbon emissions while also reducing energy bills.



If you would like to participate, pick one of the workshops below and contact the facilitator. A \$10 suggested donation to cover the cost of the workbook can be given to the facilitator at the workshop.

Tuesday lunch hour (2/10, 2/24, 3/10 & 3/24) noon -1:30 pm downtown. Bring a bag lunch if you'd like. Anne Veldman 988-6241

UU Service Committee speaks out, offers aid for Gaza

In Israel's recent war in Gaza, at least 13 Israelis were killed by Hamas rockets and Israeli friendly fire, while Israeli bombing and shelling killed 1,300 Palestinians, including many hundreds of civilians. On January 8th, the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee issued a statement deploring the violence and calling for an immediate cease fire. It also launched a Gaza Humanitarian Crisis Fund.



"International humanitarian law recognizes the sovereignty of nations and their right to act in self-defense, but it also demands protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict. On that basis, Israel's military response to the Hamas' rocket attacks is disproportionate, directly endangering the lives of large numbers of civilians." [UUSC statement] UUSC is accepting donations to provide aid to the people affected by the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. If you would like to donate by check, please make it payable to "Gaza Humanitarian Crisis Fund" and mail it to UUSC, P.O. Box 849164, Boston, MA, 02284-9164.

In mid-January, both the U.S. Senate and House overwhelmingly passed resolutions in full support of Israel's position. All Indiana Senators and Representatives supported the resolutions. Some members of the Just Peace Task Force, while strongly condemning violence on both sides, contacted Congress; we urged it to take a more balanced and courageous stand for peace.

Now that there is a fragile cease fire, it will be all the more important for President Barack Obama and Congress to work for a just peace for both Israelis and Palestinians. In particular, we urge the new administration to talk with all elected representatives of both peoples, to halt sales and transfers of offensive weapons, and to support withdrawal of Israeli settlements on land captured since 1967. These steps are essential to create a viable Palestinian state at peace with Israel. For more information, please contact David Keppel, (812) 331-2815, Keppel@sbcglobal.net.