

## **Notes from UUSJ Social Justice Leaders' Roundtable, March 12**

### **Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers**

#### Challenges:

- Attracting other generations to social justice
- Identifying potential new volunteers
- Retention/Lack of mechanisms

#### Solutions:

- Survey yes—no / Opportunity Fair-Activities Expo
- Focus groups, Social Justice Reimagined RRUUC website
- \*Richard S. Gilbert, author, The Prophetic Imperative
- \*Self-care, Food, Retreats, brief check-ins
- Take turns in leading meetings
- \*Apprenticing, Mentoring, co-chairs, breaking it into smaller pieces
- Training, Timing
- Affirmative Asking 1:1
- Ask for help when you need it
- \*Concept of Liaison
- Organizing email lists, Thank you notes

### **Funding Your Social Justice Project**

#### What:

- Share the plate and groups give presentations
- Social Justice budget
- Selling Fair Trade chocolate
- Raffles
- Collections at events
- Social Justice pledges and outreach funds

#### Challenges:

- Decision making
- Competition of Social Justice groups
- Insular
- Territoriality
- Grants—long process
- All volunteer, draining

#### Innovation

- Grants
- Faithify, crowd-sourcing
- State and local
- Bennet aw[?]
- Personal [?]
- Dinners

## **Obtaining Ministerial Support for the Social Justice Committee**

### Setting the Stage:

- SJC needs to be heavily involved in the Ministerial Search Committee (we had one of our stronger members on the committee).
- Ensure information on your church's social justice mission is easily available on line and prominently included in the packet made available to all prospective ministers.

### Keeping the Minister engaged/involved:

- Ensure SJC is actively engaged with other church committees, especially the Children's and Adult Spiritual Development Committees (RE) and the Green Sanctuary Committee.
- Invite the Minister to SJC meetings but don't expect (nor desire) the Minister to attend all of them.
  - Let the Minister know when there are specific committee meetings where their presence would be especially beneficial.
- Ensure SJC has programs that engage the entire congregation, especially with activities where people can work together.
  - Annual two weeks of hypothermia shelter; integrated program with Beacon House.
- Develop a few focus items rather than a whack-a-mole approach.
  - Social Justice Study Issue: Our minister especially likes our annual social justice focus area as it provides him a framework for part of the year. After determining our subject area, we meet with the Minister to develop a timeline for a series of sermons and film nights, discuss possible educational opportunities with the Children's and Adult Spiritual Development Committees, and determine potential deliverables (e.g., statement of conscience).
  - Outreach Sunday (Share the Plate): Minister heavily involved in our collection and usually sponsors at least one of our recipients.
- Have the SJC encourage its members support the minister in his/her outreach efforts, e.g., VOICE events or other interfaith group activities, since our support should encourage his support for our activities.
- Ensure SJC is professional: meets deadlines, fulfills obligations, and holds the minister accountable for same.

## **Tips on Writing an Effective Advocacy Letter** (From the UUSJ *Write Here! Write Now!* Toolkit)

### **Select your issue and audience.**

What are you writing about?

Who are you writing to? (mayor, city council member, state representative or official, member of US Congress, corporate CEO)

Be clear about your association with your audience. For example, if you are writing to your member of Congress, state that you are a constituent.

### **Have a clear message and action request.**

What are you concerned about? Why?

What is the action handle for your concern? (referendum, bill, shareholder resolution) What action do you want the reader to take?

### **Write in your own words, using talking points and sample letters.**

Feel comfortable with the issue and why you are writing a letter. Read through materials at the WHWN table and ask any questions you might have before you get started.

### **Be original.**

Speak from your heart. If possible, describe a personal experience or use firsthand knowledge about the subject.

### **Be brief.**

Focus on ONE issue per letter and include three parts.

1. Clearly state the issue, your position and why you hold it.
2. Give more information on the bill/action in question and evidence supporting your position. Be specific.
3. Provide a brief summary and final encouragement.

### **Be polite and courteous.**

Put yourself in the shoes of the person who will receive your letter. How would you want to be addressed and approached? While you may use forceful language, it should never be disrespectful. Address your recipient with his/her proper title.

**Include your name and full street address.**

Sign the letter with your name, address and current date at the bottom of the page. Policy makers and officials keep records of letters they receive and the positions expressed in them. They may also send you a response.