

**UUSJ Committee and Task Force Reports
for June 18, 2016 UUSJ Board Meeting**

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Committees that had nothing to report since the last meeting:

- Audit Committee (not a standing committee)
- Economic Justice Task Force (not an active Task Force)
- Gala Planning Committee
- Governance Task Force (formerly Bylaws and Standard Operations Committee)
- Issue Selection Process Task Force

Advocacy Oversight Committee Report – June 16, 2016

Members

Lavona Grow, Gary Magnussen, Anna Rhee, Larry Underwood, Adam Wasserman

There have been two meetings of the Advocacy Task Force since the February 20, 2016 Board meeting - conference call on April 5; and in person meeting on May 15. Anna Rhee started in February as a UUSJ consultant focusing on advocacy program development.

Activities and Accomplishments

Write Here! Write Now!

This toolkit for congregational letter-writing and advocacy was finalized, posted and promoted in April. It is available for download from the UUSJ website.

Democracy Awakening - April 16-18

Adam Wasserman led UUSJ's engagement in this mobilization to protect voting rights, get big money out of politics and demand an up or down vote on President Obama's Supreme Court nominee. UUSJ was a endorser, helped organize UUs for the rally and participated in the teach-in at All Souls.

UUSJ encouraged post-event follow up and has set up a Google Group listserv to continue planning and sharing of ideas among area UUs.

Citizen Activism: Everything You Need To Know

UUSJ piloted its new congregation-based advocacy training on October 4, 2015. It was adapted for a training at the Bull Run UU Church on March 26. This training program provides basic information on how to advocate effectively for social justice. Participants learn about the importance and impact of citizen activism, how to develop and deliver a clear message in personal meetings with policymakers, and where to find resources for advocacy support.

Green Climate Fund

Support of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a priority for UUSJ. UUSJ initiated a meeting request with Leo Martinez-Diaz, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environment and Energy, US Department of the Treasury and US board member on the Green Climate Fund prior to the March meeting of the GCF board. Our request grew into a meeting at the US Department of State on May 2 that included 17 representatives of the interfaith community, Mr. Martinez and representatives from the Office of Religion and Global Affairs, US Department of State. Lavona and Anna represented UUSJ. The meeting was an excellent, small group interface of the key staff from Treasury, State and the interfaith advocacy community working on the GCF. The discussion included challenges facing the GCF (funding, leadership, staffing), accreditation of organizations with first-hand knowledge of community needs (such as faith-based organizations), environmental and social safeguards in funded projects, and information sharing. There is a commitment to briefings and meetings to continue the dialogue about the US role and positions as the GCF grows and develops.

Voting Rights

At UUSJ's suggestion, the UUA hosted a voting rights webinar on June 1. UUSJ sponsored, promoted and presented in the webinar with the intention of following up with UUSJ member congregations and others in Washington, DC, Virginia and Maryland to develop a Get Out the Vote and voter education program leading up to the November general election.

Processes and Procedures

We are working with issue groups to finalize protocols and systems for the selection of advocacy issues and activities, and record-keeping related to advocacy meetings. The purpose is to provide clear guidance on the purpose of UUSJ's advocacy program, the advocacy tools and methods UUSJ uses, criteria for the selection of specific issue activities, and a streamlined method for keeping records of in person meetings with policy makers and/or their staff.

UUSJ Website and Advocacy

The website and other social media are tools for drawing in and equipping congregations and individuals with guidance and resources for advocacy on UUSJ issue priorities. The website, especially, can be strengthened to make it clear that UUSJ is an advocacy organization and to make it easier for people to get involved. For example, an "Advocacy" tab could be added. Make "Volunteer" its own tab rather than being under "Contribute." Add a section for congregations or social justice committees with links to Write Here! Write Now!, Citizen Activism trainings and other resources.

Next Steps

1. Finalize protocols and systems for issue groups on advocacy.
2. Apply for a UU Funding Program Get Out The Vote grant by June 22. As of June 16, six congregations have signed on to partner with UUSJ and support the grant application. Upon funding, finalize a Get Out the Vote and voter education program involving collective action with congregations in DC, Virginia and Maryland for the November general election. Scope of work will depend on the level of funding from the UU Funding Program.
3. Develop a train-the-trainers program for "Citizen Activism: Everything You Need to Know" by August 1; promote and schedule advocacy training sessions in congregations.
4. Establish a "Lobby Corps" of individuals who will attend regularly scheduled UU Congressional lobby days by September 1.

Prepared by Anna Rhee

Communications Committee Report – June 9, 2016

Members

Ed Butterworth, Bob Denniston, Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson

Recent Accomplishments

We met with the Core Group to show the proposed new look for our website. They approved the new look and began making suggestions for what to include, revisions to the look and feel, and in general provided constructive feedback.

Current Projects

1. Revising the website.
2. Recruiting more people to for the committee.

Future Plans

1. Resume implementing the communications plan.
2. Continue working with the Core Group and the new Executive Director to make the new website look and feel ready to go live.

Requests/Needs

The committee needs more members with an interest and some basics knowledge of communications.

Specific tasks for media volunteers are:

- Regularly consult the communications plan and media posting calendar.
- Research UU efforts pertaining to a major item on the media calendar. For example, research current and past work done specifically by local UU's around and for Earth Day.
- Using the information researched help develop Facebook and Twitter media postings.
- Meet regularly with Communications Committee, either face to face or on the phone.

And we could always use volunteers with experience in producing short videos or photographers to take pictures during UUSJ and other UU events.

Prepared by Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson

Environmental Steering Group Report – June 13, 2016

Members

Doris Marlin, Eric Goplerud, Lavona Grow

The Task Force mission is to enhance collaboration between the UUSJ congregations and amplify the regional voices for the Environment and Climate Justice, as well as promote the initiatives of various nation-wide UU environmental-related organizations (UU Climate Action Teams, Commit2Respond, UU Ministry for the Earth, and more). We normally hold quarterly meetings and coordination calls as needed to organize our efforts. Contributions to social media are growing as more and more users participate and add to the postings.

The Task Force also through past events and collaborations within congregations and overall within the region is building alliances and supports the common ground of our justice initiatives with the Reeb Voting Rights Project / Moral Mondays in North Carolina, Black Lives Matter, Economic Equity, Flint Initiatives, Ladauto Si' – Our Common Home, and others.

2016 Actions

Coordination Meetings / Presentations

- March 5, 2016 - UUSJ Green Activists Meeting: Approx. 30 – 40 Attendees

The advance meetings and telcons planned in advance of this gathering were thwarted by Snowzilla (among top 5 snowstorms to hit the area ever) and the outcome was not as robust as intended. A valuable list of resources and calendar was developed (<http://uusj.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/3-5-Green-Activists-Meeting-Resources-and-Timeline.pdf>).

Discussion: Karen Leu, GWIPL discussed organizing, Doris Marlin gave 10 min overview of the Paris Climate Agreement and UU Participation, and is available to give presentations congregations and groups, Other Announcements and some discussion on upcoming spring events

Events (Jan – May)

Below are a few of the many events that occurred at each congregation and locally with multi-congregation attendance from UUs

- January 23/30, 2016 - CCAN Polar Bear Plunge – Many Regional UUs participated and carried the Standing on the Side of Love Banner for Climate Justice
- April 11-18, 2016 - Democracy Spring / Democracy Awakening (emphasis on advocacy on April 18 & interfaith day) Huge participation from numerous congregations in the area supporting the full week of events and learning sessions, and civil disobedience action.
- May 4-11, 2016 - Break Free From Fossil Fuel with Rally on National Mall
- Hope Retreat Workshops – Several held around the region lead by Mary Pike with reference Material from Joanna Macy's work

- Earth Day events – Numerous awareness, advocacy, and congregational action events held.
- DC Divests: June 6, 2016 – The DC City Council announced their complete divestment from fossil fuels of their 6.4 Billion dollars pension fund. Many UUs who supported the UUA divestment were involved in the actions that contributed to the DC Divestment.

Current and Upcoming Events

- June 12, 2016 - Sacred Earth Sacred Trust – Representatives of Faith around the world asking leaders to restore balance to our precious planet and to protect our children’s future.
- June 22, 2016 - Elder’s Climate Action – National Group returning to Washington DC for Climate Advocacy on the Hill; home base will be All Souls UU.
- June 23, 2016 - Workshop at GA, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERFAITH ACTION AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE – With 3 other UUs who attended the Paris CoP 21 Climate Talks (Jan Dash, Rev. Peggy Clark, Dave Tucker), Doris Marlin will share the many ways UUs and UUSJ collaborated building strong multi-faith support in advance of the Climate Talks.
- July 24, 2016 – Faith Contingent Coordination in advance of “March for a Clean Energy Revolution,” Sunday, 24 July, Philadelphia, PA in advance of the DNC.
- Upcoming opportunities to offer Public Testimony supporting Federal State and Local Clear Air and other initiatives.

The Climate Justice and Environmental Task Force is looking forward to working and strategizing with the new leadership of UUSJ for the years ahead as we lean into a stronger advocacy role supporting the Seven UU Principles with emphasis on the 7th, ‘Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.’”

Prepared by Doris Marlin

The **Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions** (FACS) has taken action, with the support of UUSJ, over the last three years to create hope in the power of community-supported activism.

- UUSJ selected the FACS President, Eric Goplerud, as recipient of the Social Justice Collaboration award; FACS Community Council and UU Church of Loudoun member, Natalie Pien, received the UUSJ Environment Award. Accotink UU Church, a member of the FACS Community Council, received the UUSJ Social Justice Congregational Award for its year-long climate change concentration.
- Co-founded the National Capital Area UUs for Environmental Justice and Climate, now part of UUSJ, which meets quarterly and involves more than 20 UU congregations.
- Wrote, with UUSJ and the UU UN Office, the letter signed by UUA President Morales’ to US Secretary of State Kerry stating UU support for an ambitious, accountable Paris Agreement. With the UUSJ, we delivered the UUA letter to Secretary Kerry and met multiple times with the US lead negotiator. We secured UUA endorsement of the Paris

Pledge www.parispledgeforaction.org/. Co-lead with UUSJ a working group of 13 UU organizations that endorsed the 2015 AIW to carry out the commitments made at GA.

FACS thanks the UUSJ for its ongoing moral and financial support of FACS in our mutual efforts to addressing climate change and advocate for environmental justice. It is our growing hope that solutions are being created through fellowship to create a sustainable world now and for future generations.

For a full update on FACS's work, visit www.faithforclimate.org/ or contact Eric at Goplerud-Eric@norc.org.

Prepared by Eric Goplerud

Executive Director Search Committee Board Report – June 11, 2016

Members

Rev. Richard Nugent, Chair, Martha Ades, Mark Narkus-Kramer, David Strauss, Rev. Kate Walker

The UUSJ Executive Director Search Team has completed its process. It forwarded the names of two final candidates to the UUSJ Core Team on May 23rd. The process the Search Team followed was:

- Met to determine selection criteria and key rating weights.
- Reviewed all applicants and rated top 13.
- Held 1 hour interviews via Zoom video conference with seven candidates.
- Identified top three candidates.
- Discussed pros/cons for top three candidates in order to recommend two.

The Selection Team (Lavona Grow, Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Al Carlson, John Gubbings, Bob Denniston) and Search Team members Richard and Martha held in-person interviews with the top two candidates. After much discussion and a hard decision between two exceptionally qualified candidates, we are pleased to announce that Pavel “Pablo” DeJesus has accepted our offer.

Pablo joins us as a member of All Souls UU and has a BA from Oberlin and a Masters of Public Management from University of Maryland. He has a wealth of community organizing and policy experience as a director of Government Relations & Program Development at SEEDCO (Structured employment Economic Development, Inc.) and as Senior Legislative Officer for the Office of the governor of Puerto Rico. He has fundraising experience at the Society of the Educational Arts and has done field organizing at a CREDO & Wellstone project in Denver and at C.A.S.A. de Maryland on the voter participation initiative. His references all praised his total commitment to social justice issues. We are thrilled to welcome Pablo as our new Executive Director.

Prepared by Martha Ades

Immigration Task Force Report – June 16, 2016

Members

Dean Wanderer and David Strauss

The UUSJ Immigration Task Force spent the beginning of 2016 meeting with area legislators on refugee, detention, and immigration reform. A report of those activities was included in the Committee and Task Force Reports document for the February meeting, but you can find it here as well: <http://uusj.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/UUSJ-Immigration-Steering-Committee-Capitol-Hill-Report.pdf>. Below you'll find a list of activities since then. A full report from the Task Force will be added next week.

Activities and Accomplishments

Let Hope Bloom – End Family Detention

On Wednesday, May 4, in celebration of Mother's Day, UUSJ joined the UU Service Committee and other nonprofit organizations to call to end family detention and to honor the courage and sacrifice of Central American refugee moms by giving them flower bouquets and certificates. Giant Mother's Day cards were signed by mothers, their children, and over 1,300 UU supporters, which were then delivered to two White House officials at the West Gate. The cards were addressed to four mothers at the White House: First Lady Michelle Obama, Second Lady Dr. Jill Biden, Senior Advisor Valerie Jarrett, and Obama Assistant Cecilia Munoz. Anna Rhee, Lavona Grow, and John Gubbings of UUSJ helped create and deliver the cards.

Update & Action Steps: Syrian Refugee Crisis

For UU congregations interested in the Syrian refugee crisis, UU Church of Arlington (UUCA) and UU Church of Rockville (UUCR) have compiled important information about the refugee resettlement process, the current status of refugee resettlement in Northern Virginia, and resources for refugees in Virginia, DC, and Maryland. To learn more, please visit our website post: <http://uusj.net/wp/16145-2/>.

In early April, David Strauss and UUCR's Immigration Team provided volunteers and financially supported a dinner welcoming 30+ Syrian refugees at the University Christian Church in Hyattsville, MD. UUCR is also a site for the upcoming 2016 Immigration Film Festival, for the third consecutive year, and they hope to help register immigrants to vote.

Submitted by Elizabeth Stevens (on behalf of the Task Force)

Nominating Committee Report – June 16, 2016

Members

Nancy Sorden, Chair, Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, and Gary Magnuson

Duties

The Nominating Committee shall nominate candidates for officers of the Board of Trustees, for at-large membership on the Executive Committee and members of all standing committees. (Bylaws Article X, Duties: 10.2)

Actions/Accomplishments

The Nominating Committee met with Lavona Grow, UUSJ Board Chair, and examined together organizational needs and leadership positions on the current UUSJ Board that needed to be filled. These Board positions for fiscal year 2016-17 include both Co-Chair positions, as the current Chair, Lavona Grow, is term limited. In addition, it was determined that chairs for two standing committees, the Development and Finance Committees, need to be identified.

UUSJ Leadership/Blue Ribbon Panel Meeting

In an attempt to fill these and other important positions, the Nominating Committee developed and sponsored a UUSJ Leadership/Blue Ribbon Panel Meeting on May 19 held at UU Cedar Lane Church, to seek advice and identify persons willing to take UUSJ Board and non-Board leadership positions. Individuals sought for the panel were those with organizational development expertise, leadership skills, non-profit legal experience, and a passion for social justice. We also sought those who would know other individuals to recruit for being integral to UUSJ, working with the new Executive Director and the Board, in advancing its transition from “awareness” to “awareness AND advocacy”.

The Nominating Committee, with the support of UUSJ staff, invited Board members and non-Board members to the UUSJ Leadership/Blue Ribbon Meeting. A total of 18 individuals participated in the event. The meeting began with an overview of UUSJ history, its planned transition to advocacy work, and a report on its latest initiatives. The Committee communicated to those who were or might be interested that joining the Board in a leadership capacity was a unique opportunity to actively support UUSJ with its new mission of direct advocacy and its potential to shape regional and national policy. Participants were then asked for suggestions regarding how to carry out UUSJ’s new goals of becoming an advocacy agent for all of UUA, since UUSJ is uniquely positioned by location in the Nation’s capital, at national level opportunities to affect the course of issues that have a clear social justice moral imperative. Suggestions by meeting participants were captured by note takers, and in addition, participants were asked to fill out questionnaires with specific suggestions and names of people they would recommend to fill leadership positions and/or who have other skills needed to help UUSJ be an effective regional and national advocacy agent. Over a dozen persons were put forward for the Nominating Committee to consider. These persons have financial, legal, and advocacy skills.

The Nominating Committee is now following up and contacting those persons identified at the Leadership/Blue Ribbon Panel Meeting. Please note that the Governance Committee has considered organizational changes that would affect the number of UUSJ leadership positions.

The Committee is going to propose a UUSJ Bylaw change that would establish a new structure for the Executive Committee and that is that the two Co-Chair positions would be replaced by three different Chair positions: a Chair—for a term of one year, a Vice-Chair—who will assume the Chair after one year, and an Immediate Past Chair—to be assumed by the Chair for one year. If this new Bylaw change is approved by the Board members, Lavona Grow, the term-limited and outgoing UUSJ Chair, will assume the Immediate Past Chair position for one year.

UUSJ Board Executive Committee Members, Treasurer John Gubbings, and Secretary Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, will continue in their current Board capacities through 2017, which is the final year of their terms.

Future Plans

- Conduct follow-up with persons identified at the UUSJ Leadership/Blue Ribbon Meeting as to their interest in being considered for UUSJ Board leadership positions.
- Continue to reach out to current UUSJ Board members regarding their interest in being considered for UUSJ Board and committee leadership positions.
- Upon the development of a draft revised UUSJ Strategic Plan, sponsor a second UUSJ Leadership/Blue Ribbon Meeting, inviting potential UUSJ leadership candidates to meet, provide comment on UUSJ's future direction and priorities, and indicated their interest in supporting and being considered for UUSJ posts.
- Utilize the proposed UU congregational outreach initiative to obtain UUSJ representation from non-participatory UU congregations in the region, to recruit potential UUSJ supports, Board members, and leaders.

Requests/Needs

- Recommends that the Board revise and update the current UUSJ Strategic Plan (2013-15) to clearly describe UUSJ future direction and strategic priorities and activities.
- Recommends that the Board develop, update, approve, and execute a UUSJ Board member/leader succession plan.

Prepared by Nancy Sorden

Program Committee Report – June 12, 2016

Members

Pat Karlsen, Co-chair, Martha Ades Co-chair, Lavona Grow, John Gubbings, Marsha White

During the Program Year, September 2015 - June 2016, activity occurred both within UUSJ and in support of other communities. The Program Committee held educational programs and supported witnessing and advocacy events. Many endeavors happened that were not specifically Program Committee events but are noted below as examples of activities where there was need for UUSJ's continued support.

In **September** UUSJ co-sponsored the Grandparents Climate Action Day training and advocacy event. We also supported the Moral Action on Climate Change events and held Post Pope review events.

In **October** UUSJ held the Seventh Awards Gala giving awards to individuals or groups from eight congregations who exemplified outstanding Social Justice work during the recent past. We also raised funds to support UUSJ's Social Justice Grants Program. Also in October we supported the Greater Washington Immigration Film Festival and pilot tested an Advocacy 101 training session.

In **November** at Channing Memorial in Towson, MD, UUSJ offered "Beyond Partisan Division" was presented by the Revs. Anya and Scott Samler-Michaels. We also held an Awakening the Dreamer program at Arlington UU.

In **March** 17 social justice leaders, representing eight congregations, attended a Social Justice Leaders Roundtable at River Road UU that brought together regional Social Justice leaders for sharing and brainstorming. Also in March Bull Run UU used the UUSJ Advocacy Training modules for a customized program.

In **April** we supported Democracy Spring and Democracy Awakening events and held pre-event orientation meetings.

On **June 1** we co-sponsored a "Get Out The Vote" webinar in conjunction with Standing on the Side of Love. Susan Leslie moderated. 100 people dialed in from across the US.

Throughout the year we continued support for the regional Green Activists meetings held every couple of months.

Programs we hope to support in 2016-17 include:

- Support for the Democracy Awakening follow-up.
- Follow-up on 2014 CSAI – Escalating Inequality
- Support for Advocacy Training classes
- Membership meeting in the early Fall 2016.
- Information meeting related to 2016 CSAI voted for at 2016 GA.

Prepared by Martha Ades and Pat Karlsen