

Report for Annual General Meeting-May 7, 2017

Committee Name

Social Justice Committee (a.k.a. Working Group, Action Team, Gang, Crew, Group, . . .)

Purpose of Committee

We seek to promote social justice by

- Ensuring that a strong and visible commitment to social justice is central to the purpose, identity, and activity of the church.
- Nurturing a culture, within the church and its many communities, in which social justice is understood, valued, and integrated into the spirit of fellowship within the church; and
- Educating the congregation on issues related to social justice and facilitating participation by members of the congregation in social justice activities.

For the past year we have focused some of our efforts on homelessness and poverty. These are core issues for our community, and we believe the Church can have an impact. This year we also agreed to explore ways to support Indigenous actions, as allies, to protect the environment and to promote land rights, social justice, and human rights.

Members of the Working Group and Church also pursue a variety of other social justice issues (see the addendum).

Members

Sylvia Krogh and Lauren Kay, Co-Chairs

No set membership; 36 participants on contact list

Major Actions of 2015-16

Services/Sermons

- May 22: “Mapping a Bright Future for Young Children” with Susan Lynch, service leaders Audrey Brooks and Jeff Bisanz
- Sep 25: “When is Enough Enough? Gender and Sexual Diversity” with Lorne Warneke and Patricia Willerton, service leader Lauren Kay
- Sep 25: Discussion with Lorne Warneke and Patricia Willerton; co-hosted Soup

- Dec 11: Pulpit Editorial—Neighbor Cente (Rosemary Falconer)
- Feb 12: “Exploring Islam” with Salima Versi, service leader Audrey Brooks
- Feb 12: Discussion with Salima Versi; co-hosted Soup Sunday

Articles/Announcements in UCE Newsletter

- Summer, September: “7th Annual Genocide Memorial Service” (Audrey Brooks)
- September, October: “Making a Human Connection” (Jackie Withers)
- September: “Habitat for Humanity Interfaith Volunteers” (Audrey Brooks)
- December: “Amnesty International Write for Rights” (Marilyn Gaa)
- December: “Old Stratcona Youth Society” (Marilyn Gaa)
- February: “Sixth Annual Interfaith Works Project” (Audrey Brooks)
- March: “Social Justice News” (Audrey Brooks)
- April: “Mural for Our Church?” (Jackie Withers and Jeff Bisanz)
- April: “Contributions to Homeless Connect” (Jackie Withers and Jeff Bisanz)

Other Activities

- May 14: Organized participation in rally at the legislature for transgender rights
- May 15: Organized contributions to and volunteers for participation in Homeless Connect Edmonton
- June 4: Participation in Pride Parade
- June 25: Co-sponsored Change for Children Concert, featuring the Minstrels from Managua
- July 12-13: Participation in Interfaith Habitat for Humanity build
- July 17: 8th Annual Genocide Memorial Service, organized by Audrey Brooks
- November-December: Organized UCE “Backpacks for Kids” Campaign for the Old Strathcona Youth Society
- December 4: Conducted Amnesty International’s Write for Rights Campaign at UCE
- November-December: Organized PIN campaign
- March-April: Participation in Interfaith Habitat for Humanity build
- Mar 4: Participated in protest at Churchill Square against anti-Islam rally
- Mar 5: Participate in UCE Share Fair
- March-April: Coordinated donations for Homeless Connect
- March: Made contribution to Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice
- Apr 22: Participated in March for Science
- Apr 30: Organized information session for congregation regarding the Change for Children offer of a mural
- Year ‘round: Collections for the Bissell Centre (Rosemary Falconer, Barbara Forbes)

Outcomes Achieved

For outcomes related to goals, see Major Actions above.

Feb 19: Terms of Reference approved

Feb 19: Strategic goals revised to include support for Indigenous actions

Planned Actions for 2016-17

- May 21 service, “Youth Empowerment” with CanUUdle youth
- Planning for Blue Dot Campaign
- Exploring options for work on poverty with EndPovertyEdmonton
- Exploring options for supporting Indigenous actions

Recommendations for Board Consideration (if any)

Please continue the practice of having a member of the Board serve as liaison to the Social Justice Committee.

Addendum: Community Engagement

Individuals who have participated in UCE social justice activities are involved in a number of other social justice groups and activities, including:

Athabasca University, Truth and Reconciliation

Bissell Centre

Black Lives Matter

Camp FYrefly

Canadian Orthopaedic Nurses Association

Canadian Red Cross

Central Region Interfaith Housing Initiative

Child Haven International

Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP)

Council of Canadians

Democrats Abroad—Edmonton

Early Learning and Care Steering Committee

Edmonton Community Foundation

Edmonton Interfaith Center

EndPovertyEdmonton

Friends of CBC

Greenpeace

Habitat for Humanity

Homeless Connect

Idle No More
Interfaith Homelessness Committee
Interfaith Genocide Memorial
International Day for the Ending of Racial Discrimination
Muttart Foundation
One International
Raging Grannies
Sahakarini—Inter-world Education and Development Association
Save the Children Canada
Stephen Lewis Foundation: Edmonton Grandmothers
University of Alberta, Alumni Pride Association
University of Alberta, International Week
Twelve-Step Mentoring
Welcome Home
Women in Black
Youth Empowerment and Support Services (YESS)
Youth Restorative Action Project

We hope that other members of the congregation will join this effort to increase the Church's engagement in social justice issues.

—Submitted by Jeff Bisanz