

Committee/Group Name: Social Justice Working Group

Purpose of Committee: 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.

Members: No fixed membership; 38 recipients on email list; Lauren Kay and Jeff Bisanz, co-chairs.

Major Actions of 2017-18

Sunday services

- May 21, "Youth Empowerment," with CanUddle youth
- October 15, "Democratic Participation," with guest speaker Sarah Eadie and subsequent Soup Sunday (led by the Membership Committee)
- January 14, "Blanket Exercise" and subsequent snack
- February 11, "Resilience," with guest speaker Cheryl Whiskeyjack and subsequent Soup Sunday (led by the Membership Committee)

Organized participation in events (with others)

- Mass blanket exercise at the Alberta Legislature, organized by Reconciliation in Solidarity Edmonton (June)
- Pride Parade (June)
- Habitat for Humanity builds
- Women's March (January)
- Rally for Sixties Scoop Survivors (March)

Other activities and events

- Proposed a motion at 2017 AGM for the church to accept the Peace Mural (May)
- Ninth Annual Genocide Memorial (July)
- Coordinated (with Janet Polkovsky) UCE's participation in Homeless Connect as a centre for contributions (October)
- Pulpit editorial about the UN-UNO (November)
- Amnesty International Write for Rights Campaign (December)
- Prepared a motion for 2018 AGM regarding environmental rights (April)
- Provided support for the Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice (April)
- Coordinated (with Janet Polkovsky and Karen Bilida) UCE's participation in Homeless Connect as a centre for contributions (April)

- Increased awareness of UCE's social justice activities within the church and in the community through social media (thanks to the Communications Committee)
- Updated the social justice area of the website (thanks to the Communications Committee)

Outcomes Achieved

- Promoted increased awareness in the congregation on topics such as democratic participation and reconciliation
- Initiated the process of exploring ways to contribute to Indigenous actions
- Organized UCE participation in community activities related to social justice

Planned Actions for 2018-19

- Prepare a service featuring the REDress Photography Project (July)
- Prepare the tenth annual Interfaith Genocide Memorial event (July)
- Provide three additional services featuring social justice themes
- Develop options for adult and youth education regarding reconciliation
- Explore collaborations with Bent Arrow
- Review list of charities re Sharing Our Abundance and make recommendations to Board
- Continue to develop ways to work on issues related to poverty, homelessness, and reconciliation and to explore ways to support Indigenous actions
- Collaborate with Communications Committee to advertise UCE social justice activities within the church and in the community

Recommendations for Board Consideration (if any)

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

Submitted by: Jeff Bisanz

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
Dying with Dignity
Early Learning and Care Steering Committee
Edmonton Interfaith Center
EndPovertyEdmonton
Friends of CBC
Greenpeace
Habitat for Humanity
Homeless Connect
Idle No More
Interfaith Genocide Memorial
Interfaith Housing Initiative
International Day for the Ending of Racial Discrimination
Memorial Society of Edmonton and District
#MeToo
Missing and Murdered Women
Native Rights
Pride Week
Raging Grannies
Save the Children Canada
Stephen Lewis Foundation: Grandmothers for Africa
Twelve-Step Mentoring
Welcome Home
Woman in Black

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