

## **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 in the spirit of goodwill; 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; 22 recipients on email list; Ali Hammington, Chair.

### **Major Actions of 2018-19**

#### Sunday services

- July 8, REDress service (with guests Mufty Mathewson and Brenda Jackson)
- July 15, Tenth Annual Interfaith Genocide Memorial Service
- Oct 28, Sanctuary (with guest Paula Kirman)
- Feb 24, Racism and Black History (with guest Deborah Dobbins, Shiloh Centre for Multicultural Roots)
- April 28, Indigenous Spirituality (with guests from the Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society)

#### Organized UCE participation in events (with others)

- Pride Parade (June)
- SMILE Street Parties outside the Hope Mission, one Sunday evening per month
- Homeless Memorial, June 15
- Honoring Feast (EndPovertyEdmonton's Indigenous Circle), June 28
- Homeless Connect (coordinated UCE's participation as a centre for contributions, October and April)
- Habitat for Humanity (provided lunches for volunteer builders, October and November)
- Amnesty International Write for Rights Campaign (December)
- No Women Without campaign to collect feminine hygiene products for distribution via WIN House (February)
- Transgender Day of Visibility (March)
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March)

#### Other activities and events

- Proposed a motion 2018 AGM for the UCE to urge City Council to declare Edmonton to be an environmental rights city (May). Letters delivered to Council (September).

- Prepared a list of charities for Sharing Our Abundance and submitted to Board (May)
- Initiated a column on social justice in the UCE's monthly newsletter
- Recommended to the Board that the annual Genocide Memorial become a regular UCE event and responsibility
- Increased awareness of UCE's social justice activities within the church and in the community through social media (thanks to the Communications Committee)
- Assisted with Soup Sundays
- Assumed coordination of UCE's support of weekly distribution of food hampers for the Food Bank, following Maurice Bourgoïn's retirement from that position

#### Special Recognition

- Audrey Brooks received the Salvos Prelorentzos Peace Awards from Project Ploughshares Edmonton (September) and was recognized in the Alberta Legislature for her work toward building a welcoming and inclusive society according to human rights principles.

#### Outcomes Achieved

- Promoted increased awareness in the congregation on topics such as reconciliation and discrimination
- Continued to explore ways to contribute to Indigenous actions
- Organized UCE participation in community activities related to social justice

#### Planned Actions for 2019-20

- Plan for special projects involving social justice
- Prepare for the annual Interfaith Genocide Memorial (July)
- Provide Sunday services featuring social justice themes
- 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 promote UCE social justice activities within the church and in the community

#### Recommendations for Board Consideration

- Please continue the practice of having a member of the Board serve as liaison to the Social Justice Working Group.
- We request a plan to increase the funds available for compensating guest speakers and guest performers who contribute to church services.

**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:

Actions to Counter Yellow Vests  
Bissell Centre  
Black Lives Matter  
Camp Dragon Fly (née fYrefly)  
Central Region Interfaith Housing Initiative  
Child Haven International  
Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP)  
Council of Canadians  
Dying with Dignity  
Early Learning and Care Steering Committee  
Edmonton Coalition against War and Racism  
Edmonton Interfaith Center  
EndPovertyEdmonton, indigenous Circle  
EndPovertyEdmonton, Stewardship Round Table  
Food Bank  
Friends of CBC  
Habitat for Humanity  
Interfaith Genocide Memorial  
Interfaith Housing Initiative  
International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination  
International Women's Day March  
Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Women  
Memorial Society of Edmonton and District  
Pride Parade and Pride Week  
Raging Grannies  
Robertson Wesley Community Dinner and lunches  
Save the Children Canada  
Smile Street Parties (at the Hope Mission)  
Transgender Day of Visibility  
Twelve-Step Mentoring  
United Nations International Day of Peace  
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.