

USH Social Justice Council Meeting

Minutes, September 19, 2023

7:00 – 8:35 p.m.

Reminder: Meetings are the third Tuesday of each month from 7PM to 8:30 PM

Attendees: Judy Sullivan, chair, Joanne Orlando, Louise Harmon, Sherry Manetta, Fred Louis, Gloria Bent, Dana Donovan, Gloria Francesca Mengual, Diana Heymann, Sofia Rosselet, Susan Hope, Reverend Bob

Judy called the meeting to order and gave the reading.

Check-in and Social Justice Reflections

Ideas for social justice focus and activities were suggested, and included:

- Reaffirm our intent to work through and with other organizations that may be leading efforts in our target areas. These organizations include GHIAA and other UU churches in the Hartford metro area.
- Joanne will continue to focus on USH activities that benefit The Village for Families and Children. All we can do for The Village right now is fundraise as the acuity of the children is so high, and so many children are in DCF custody, that interaction is restricted. Joanne will include more information in the enews about Village activities on a regular basis. Over \$2,000 was collected for The Village over the summer.
- Gloria Bent and Susan Hope expressed interest in refocusing on AIM and disability matters. Gloria is spending time addressing exclusions in Medicare Advantage plans that straight Medicare covers. Gloria is the head of the Subcouncil on Inclusion and will work with Judy to clarify the mission.
- Assessing the impact of our efforts on Hartford is important. In addition to GHIAA, the Horace Bushnell Food Pantry, Fern Street food pantry, Noah Webster tutoring and the Upper Albany NRZ, we should learn more about what is going on in Hartford. Perhaps develop a list of questions that might help us sort through ideas as to where we want to focus. We should be better educated in the community resources that are available.
- Committee members are individually involved in letter writing on issues.
- Explore further the concept of “doing with” vs. “doing for”. Raising money is in the “doing for” category and is good but not enough. Letting others, particularly people of color, take the lead and providing our support is important.
- 2024 is an election year and our level of involvement in “UU the Vote” and related voting initiatives should be explored.

Minutes

Joanne moved and Dana seconded to approve the minutes of the June meeting. Approved with one abstention.

GHIAA

We reviewed the GHIAA email of activities (attached to these minutes). Information will be included in the enews. There were various comments on how well-respected GHIAA is at the Capital because of its professionalism and they the fact they always do their homework.

Rev Bob suggested Judy do a testimonial at a service about how GHIAA has profoundly impacted her life.

SJ Website

Joanne, Louise and Judy have nearly finished a revised SJ website section. Karolina will help with editing and formatting. Meeting minutes will be uploaded in the future within a week of the meeting.

Anti-Racism Programming

Three new programs are in development/under consideration. These are:

- Movie/pizza night November 10—the movie will be I Am Not Your Negro (90 minutes) and Gloria Mengual will lead a discussion.
- There will be seven discussion sessions over the course of several months, led by Gloria, based on a podcast series which in turn is based on a book by Heather McGhee entitled *The Sum of Us*. More information is here <https://www.thesumofuspodcast.com/#Episode-by-Episode-Guide>. The topics include:
 - Environmental Justice - the right to clean water
 - Felon Disenfranchisement and Voting Rights
 - Minimum Wage
 - Food Justice and Immigration
 - Sundown Towns and Ordinances
 - Reproductive Rights
 - Land Reparations

More information will follow as the program is developed. Current thinking is that participants would listen to the podcast (average length: 50 minutes) prior to the meeting (zoom or hybrid) and could attend either all or only those sessions of interest. It was suggested that we invite someone knowledgeable on each topic to participate in each of the discussion sessions. We could invite other UU churches to participate as well as reach out to Gloria's mailing list of about 50 people, all associated with USH. Discussion sessions would likely be in the evening, perhaps 7:00. Gloria would be the discussion leader.

- Judy is exploring our participation in the Hartford Public Library African American Literature book club. This book club has been meeting for several years and has an impressive reading list. Judy is in conversation with the leader on how USH could participate and will attend the group's October zoom meeting as part of this exploration. More information is here <https://hplct.libguides.com/c.php?g=1005768&p=8731269>

GNOs for 2023/24

- Sept - PFLAG
- Oct – Hawkwing – Diana coordinating
- Nov - IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services) – Sherry and Greg Nickett coordinating
- Dec - CT Foodshare
- Jan - Operation Fuel – needs are expected to be high this winter
- Feb - IREJN (Interreligious Eco-Justice Network) – discuss with Mary Sherwin and Bill Simmons

Other Matters/Announcements

More regular food donations are needed for the Horace Bushnell Food Pantry.

A UUSE member has asked if anyone from USH would like to join the board of the CT Council for Interreligious Understanding. It was agreed that more information about the organization and its role was needed. Dana will research.

USH and Fern Street are meeting to develop a joint approach to OWL training so OWL can be offered in the spring. The Asylum Hill Congregational Church might also participate.

There is a UU “unconference” in Meriden in November to discuss topics of importance to UUs. More information will be put in the enews.

Should the Village uniform fundraiser in July and August be treated as a GNO? .

Adjournment

Judy adjourned the meeting.