

## Social Justice Minutes

April 16, 2024

Present: Judy Sullivan, chair, Gloria Bent, Louise Harmon, Diana Heymann, Susan Hope, Joanne Orlando

*Chalice lighting/reading:*

*Hope begins in the dark, the stubborn hope that if you just show up and try to do the right thing, the dawn will come. You wait and watch and work: you don't give up.*

Anne Lamott

### Check in

- 1 Minutes – Last month's minutes were approved by email and are posted online.
- 2 EqUUal Access/Disability Justice - Gloria Bent reported on the progress that we are making on ensuring the chancel is safe and accessible.
  - The lift has been serviced and is now working. Karolina is having another key made which will be in the sanctuary, along with instructions on its use. We discussed who should be trained in how to use the lift, e.g., the worship associates, the greeters, etc.
  - The subcommittee met with Aaron Bleck on April 14<sup>th</sup> to discuss the installation of five new railings that will be ADA compliant. We have two quotes, one from Ironworks, and the other from Aaron. Aaron's quote was considerably lower since he is donating the labor. The cost will be around \$1000, and as soon as we have a written estimate from Aaron, we will present it to the Building & Grounds Committee. If things move expeditiously, the railings should be installed in 3-4 weeks. Aaron is also going to make a proposal to make a railing and gate around the organ pit.
  - Gloria has had conversations with Laura Cipriano of the Security Committee. There is a plan to have the handicapped door to the building have a keypad lock installed, at a lower height, so that a person in a wheelchair could use it. They also discussed the issue of a potential emergency and persons who are hearing impaired not being able to hear the warning signal.
- 3) Race Matters – The Sum of US – April 4 discussion has been moved to April 18.
4. Horace Bushnell Children's Food Pantry – Diana Heymann placed a suggestion in the e-news that if members forgot to bring canned goods, they could donate cash in the offering baskets for Horace Bushnell.
5. GNOs
  - Discussion for May GNO: Gloria Bent informed the committee about *Keep the Promise* which is part of a larger coalition dealing with mental health issues. She told us about 4 legislative efforts that *Keep the Promise* has been involved with at the Connecticut State Assembly, a bill on peer-led respite services; a bill dealing with Husky CT; a bill that would expedite wheelchair repairs; and a bill requiring a certain number of health care facilities to provide handicapped accessible equipment for a range of medical tests, such as mammograms, or other tests requiring the patient to stand or move. **The Subcommittee voted unanimously in favor of making *Keep the Promise* the GNO for May.** Gloria Bent is going to take responsibility for contacting them about a speaker on the second Sunday in May.
  - March – The Village for Families and Children. USH raised \$1,527 (\$713 for USH).

- April - Brother Carl Hardrick Institute spoke on April 14<sup>th</sup>. (HQ @ Wilson-Gray YMCA) [bchinstitute.org](http://bchinstitute.org)
- June – The youth group will probably choose youth the Church of St Eats.
- Horace Bushnell: **The Subcommittee voted unanimously to have the Horace Bushnell Children’s Food Pantry be a GNO for next year, the date to be determined later.**
- Judy Sullivan reviewed the GNO policy for the calendar year. At the Annual Meeting in May 2022, the congregation approved the policy that USH will have GNOs from September through June with a 50/50 split. In the summer, July and August, we have a separate fundraiser for our next-door neighbor, The Village, for their back-to-school project. This is not a GNO, and therefore, there is no 50/50 split. Members can make donations to The Village fundraiser, either by check or by donating on line.

## 6. GHIAA

- House Meetings - March 20—Judy Sullivan reported that it was a success, with 56 participants who divided into 6 groups. Rev. AJ brought students from UCONN. Our co-hosts were The Urban Hope Refuge Church – Rev AJ Johnson and the New Antioch Baptist Church – Pastor Jeff Powell.
  - 56 attendees/6 small groups
- Rev. Jocelyn Gardner Spencer, GHIAA Lead Organizer, was the Pulpit Guest on March 24.
- Diana Heymann reported on her work with GHIAA on the MIRA project. She has attended a meeting with the President of MIRA, as well as going to a MIRA Board meeting today. At issue are the ‘tipping fees’ that MIRA has been paying to municipalities to make up for their loss of hauling. Diana also discussed the progress on the cleanup of the site.

7. Veterans for Peace – Fred Louis will report on this at a later meeting.

## 8. New Business

- Judy Sullivan reported on a presentation that Bill Simmons made before the Board, proposing that USH participate in a Home Energy Assessment Competition. The Board wanted him to get the Social Justice Council involved, but he was unable to come to this meeting due to time constraints.
- Judy Sullivan wants committee members to consider ways in which we can get more involved in environmental justice.
- Judy Sullivan reported on the Get Out the Vote program. She received an email from Sue Wilson from Fern Street, asking if USH would like to work with them on sending postcards. Fern Street is working with the Center for Common Ground, and the project is called ‘Reclaim the Vote.’ Judy told Sue Wilson that USH would like to work with Fern Street on this issue.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 pm.