

Social Justice Meeting

September 28, 2020

The Zoom meeting was called to order by chair, Tony Giordano. Others present were: Aimee VanDuyne, Judy Stevens, Joe & Anne Houle, Mya Nester, Catherine Eckert, Sarah Klepner, Ramona and Irene Gibson.

Mya reported that the UUCMC Board fully supports the 8th Principal. Tony reported that when he gave an update on the 8th Principal at a recent Council meeting he got questions but no opposition. Some questioned as to why we are doing this ahead of the UUA.

Sarah and Ramona presented Speak Out, their proposed program for people of color to share their experiences. It would be held via zoom, open to all ages, and will probably begin in late October or early November. Aimee suggested this should be a long term program, possibly for 2 years; meeting one time/month, and should be sponsored by the Racial Justice Task Force. Discussion of where to find participants. Suggestions: T. Thomas Fortune House, local black churches, other UU congregations.

For our next Member Spotlight we nominated Mya for the work she has done with the UUFA Gun Violence task force as well as others issues.

Discussion of how UUCMC can sign on to issues; not just the Social Justice committee. Judy will write an outline to take to the Board. She suggested that if our action falls under a UUA Statement of Conscience we can do so without Board approval.

Judy reported that two pieces of environmental legislation passed recently.

Anne, co-chair of UUFA Criminal Justice Reform task force, reported that the bill to release persons from prisons who have less than one year left on their sentence has passed the NJ legislature; waiting for signature from Gov. Murphy. Possibly 2,700 - 3,000 current prisoners could be released. The task force continues to monitor prison conditions. The death rate of prisoners in NJ is one of the highest in the country. New Jersey Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC) has been renamed. New name: NJ Prison Watch.

Mya stated that the UUFA Gun Violence Task Force is working on how to present a safe storage bill that would not unfairly target people of color.

Aimee reported that a UU church in Louisville, KY is serving as a sanctuary for people protesting racial injustice. The protests are working!

Tony reported that the UU the Vote program of letter writing in conjunction with Vote Forward, urging voters in many other states to vote in the 11/3 election has produced 3,000 letters so far. Aiming for 5,000. Dialog October 6 in conjunction with LWV at 7pm on zoom with good information on how to fill out mail-in ballots, etc.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40. Next SJ meeting, Monday, November 2, 7:00 via zoom.

Respectfully submitted

Irene Gibson, recorder