

UUC Social Justice Council Minutes

September 28, 2024

The Mission of the UUC Social Justice Council is to facilitate communication and cooperation between the Council members, Social Justice Committees, UUC Board of Trustees, UUC congregation, and the wider community.

Attendees: Linda Stoller (chair), Carol Hamilton, Cibby Orozco, Eliseo Santana, Mary Ann Hamilton, Carole Vaughn and Anne Burnham (secretary pro tem)

Opening words and check-in

Minutes for August 24th meeting accepted
Treasurer's report: not available (Bob away)
Community Outreach for October: Meals on Wheels

Committee Reports

Racial Justice (Trude): written report

We noted:

- Saturday Shoppes: September 6 and 7 (Labor Day Beat Down, R&B Night of Vibes) and September 14 (Taco Night)
- The "Historic African-American Communities of Pinellas County" lecture by Sandra Rooks, president of the Clearwater African-American History Museum on September 4, 6:30 PM, Palm Harbor Library Community Room.
- The book talk by Dr. David Ponton about his new book, *Houston and the Permanence of Segregation: An Afropessimist Approach to Urban History* on September 20, 7-8:30 PM, Pinellas County African American Museum.

Carole V. mentioned that the African American History Museum in Clearwater will be having a discussion about *Get Out* (a horror movie with racial justice implications) on Oct. 4th at 7 PM.

FAST (Linda): FAST has had house meetings and some UUC members have signed up for teams (even some who are not yet members). A new issue will be selected this year, in addition to 2 previous ones (clean water/flooding and affordable housing). The Annual Assembly, where issues will be voted on, will be at Holy Family Catholic Church (200 78th Ave NE, St. Pete) on Oct. 28th at 7 PM. Jacqueline Reyes, current lead organizer at FAST, will be moving, so there will be a national search for her replacement. First interviews will be by DART (Direct Action & Research Training Center); Linda is on the local hiring committee that will do follow-up interviews.

Environmental Justice (Eloise): written report

After a summer hiatus, the EJT met on Wednesday, September 18th. Six members provided much valuable information as we look forward to our new year. Our discussions included the upcoming SJC retreat; plans and discussion about upcoming educational programs and *Octagram* posts; and further discussion on the impact of plastics on our health.

We also talked about attending events other groups have this fall (such as a Sierra Club event to view *Bittersweet Muck*, a film about air quality in Florida's sugar country, at Dunedin Brewery on Nov. 19th at 6 PM (note special time). We'll post the event in the *Octagram*; Linda told Carol H. that since carpooling may be set up from UUC, this event can also be included in the SJC Calendar. We have a new zoom number for EJT meetings on the third Wednesday of each month: <https://zoom.us/j/98484795146>. Please join in for an enlightening meeting on Oct. 16th.

NAMI (Christina): no report

Interfaith Tampa Bay (Mary Ann): The group had a good meeting this month. Interfaith Tampa Bay Week will have various events Oct. 20-26 with the theme “Faith, Diversity, Democracy—Our Common Ground.” Check the SJC Calendar for details.

New and Continuing Programs

Black Lives Matter banner: Linda now has banner in hand. Bill Newton and Carl Hansen are beginning work on the frame for it, should be hung soon.

Postcard writing: Linda reported that postcard writing for Issue 4 will be one of the workshops for “Action Sunday” tomorrow.

PFLAG: Meetings are starting up again at UUC on the 2nd Thurs. each month. The meeting on Oct. 17th will be in 2 parts: 5:30 PM, meal + social time; 7-9 PM, community mtg. with panel & speakers.

UUC Garden: Cibby told us that she thinks Saturday afternoon will be better for families than Friday evenings. The new event, called Last Saturday of the Month, aims to reach members of the community interested in gardening or wanting to volunteer in our garden. The goal is to activate people—especially BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) groups—to embrace vegetable gardening for better nutrition, ending hunger and caring for the earth. From 1-2 PM today seeds and plants will be given away for those starting a garden.

The UUC Garden has launched a partnership with 15th Street Farm in St. Pete and in January Chef Manuel will conduct a cooking class at the garden; stay tuned for more details. Cibby also mentioned that UUC became a member of the Coalition of Community Gardens, a nonprofit that highlights and supports community gardens in the area. Also, gardeners in Largo have expressed interest in coming to the UUC Garden to volunteer. Hibiscus-based roselle tea, an alternative to cola/soda, will be made at tomorrow’s “Action Sunday.”

HEP: Anne has been unable to connect with Madeline Stoner this past week in order to get more details about the Adopt-a-Family Program that is supposed to kick off in October. SJC had discussed the possibility of one of the covenant groups organizing it as their volunteer commitment for this year. Difficulty communicating with HEP far enough ahead to make plans for UUC’s involvement is a concern. Linda charged Anne with figuring out whether we can work with HEP for gift giving this year or if it might be better to do our traditional Mitten Tree, perhaps with the Shepherd Center in Tarpon Springs again. Carol H. graciously offered to help Anne organize.

Alianza: Eliseo reported that Alianza is having a forum for the 13th Congressional District on Friday, Oct. 18th at 7 PM in the Octagon. The organization will pay full fare for the rental but is asking SJC to promote the event, perhaps as a cohost. Flyers will be out this week. Linda asked Carol H. to include it in the SJC Calendar.

SJC Retreat: Linda said the retreat planning committee will be meeting this week to make final preparations for Oct. 19th. Trude’s friend Priscilla will be providing entertainment following lunch. Cibby will check to see if 15th Street Farm would be interested in catering the meal, or perhaps John Foster. Linda reminded us that the retreat is open to the whole UUC community, so invite others!

Social Justice report: Linda will be giving the Social Justice Report on the 1st Sunday for the next few months in order to accommodate “Action Sunday” on the 4th Sunday.

Social Justice Calendar – see EJ, Interfaith Tampa Bay and Alianza (above)

Next meeting: Oct. 26th at 9:30 AM on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne Burnham