

2017-18 Social Justice Committee Report

Thank you to our social justice leaders and team members, who made our programs run smoothly and provided opportunities for UCWC members to put our UU values into action. Leaders are listed with their activities (below). Thank you also to:

Rev. Dan, who showed up, spoke, and sang at community events for the environment, gun violence prevention, and at Social Justice events in our building, including leading the Memorial to the Lost Dedication, Transgender Day of Remembrance, and March for the Environment

Pam Baxter, DLF, who led RE social justice projects, helped with UUSC Guest at Your Table, and organized the Puerto Rico Maria Fund collection

Maggie Christy, who put SJ items in *Connections*, among other things

Steve Sander, who maintained our social justice web pages and produced our fliers

For more details on the work of Social Justice groups, go to <http://ucwc.org/justice>.

Subcommittee/Team/Group Activities

- **Black Lives Matter Committee.** Flo Miller and Sandra Schaal, Co- Chairs
 - [Examining Whiteness Series](#). October - December. Held a six-series workshop on "Examining Whiteness". 37 people attended, including 6 facilitators.
 - **NAACP Freedom Fund Luncheon.** November 10. Urged people to attend. Placed an ad in the program booklet. Steve Sander made the booklet.
 - **"Bayard Rustin: Our Own Non-Violent Revolutionary" Sunday service.** January 14. Presented by Flo Miller, BLM Chair.
 - ["Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin" Film Screening](#). February 25. Follow-up to the January 14 Sunday service. The film showing was successful with 51 attendees, a good number from outside the congregation.
 - **Black History Month Display.** February. Created a visual display in the foyer to remind UCWC members of the importance of Black Lives Matter.
 - **UUA Jubilee Training.** March. Four UCWC members attended a 3-day Jubilee Training Workshop.
 - **Centering Book Discussions.** Held two book discussions about the [UUA Common Read, Centering](#).
 - ["Come Sunday" Film Screening](#). June 24. Documents the story of a black preacher in a large integrated Baptist church to a position as a preacher at All Soul's Unitarian Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma.
 - The BLM Committee is previewing films and researching for a film series in the fall.
- **Defenders of Democracy.** Matt Zencey, Chair, Tom Buglio and Charlot Barker, Co-chairs
 - **Sponsored [Women Talk](#).** Presentation and Panel Discussion. January 24. Sanctuary. Presented by Chester County Fund for Women and Girls. Sponsored by Defenders of Democracy. Cathy Palmquist organized our participation.
 - [Daring Democracy Forum](#). February 23. Sanctuary. *Daring Democracy* authors offered information and training on how we can best put our democratic/UU principals into action after the results of the 2016 election. Sponsored by the writers of the book, the March on Harrisburg group, the Poor People's Campaign, and Defenders of Democracy. UU congregations across PA held these events.

- [Bridging the Red-Blue Divide](#). May 19. Defenders of Democracy sponsored a training session on how to communicate constructively with people who hold different political views. It was led by a trained moderator from the group Better Angels. About 20 people attended. Cyndy Heck was the organizer.
- **Diversity Book Group.** Debby Kern and Lorrie McKinley
 - Monthly discussion to explore a variety of “differences” through both literature and film, so that we may better understand ourselves and others thereby promoting social justice on a personal level.
- **Sanctuary Congregation Team.** Kathryn Racette and Barrie Eichhorn.
 - **Holiday Cards for Immigrant Families Held in Detention Centers.** December 10. We worked with the K-2 RE class to make holiday cards. Some were signed by children and some brought up to the lobby to be signed by adults. We also had available information on how to order gifts to be distributed in the detention centers as well as to immigrant children affected by the recent hurricanes. Sponsored by the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.
 - **Informational Immigration Event:** December 13. Chester County Library. Lindsey Sweet, immigration attorney and UCWC member, spoke about how the current immigration system works, what has changed under the Trump Administration, and what is of particular concern to our Chester County immigrant community. Presented by Chester County Marching Forward.
 - **Building a Network of Support for Immigrants and Refugees in Our Area:** Our Sanctuary Forum on February 7 included representatives from PeoplePower West Chester, El Buen Samaritano United Methodist Church, the Westtown Monthly Meeting, St. Agnes Parish, and Cornerstone Christian Fellowship. We also work with La Comunidad Hispana and Zoom, a transportation initiative of Family Service of Chester County.
 - **Providing Transportation:** We have an ongoing mission to provide transportation for residents of our local area who must travel to Philadelphia or farther for business related to their immigration status. This spring we began partnering with Zoom and La Comunidad Hispana in Kennett Square to provide Zoom drivers to transport their clients to medical and social service appointments at La Comunidad as well as immigration-related appointments in Philadelphia and other locations.
 - **Meeting with West Chester Mayor:** In June, members of the Sanctuary Team will be meeting with Mayor Diane Herrin and representatives of other local organizations to discuss ICE activity in the area.
 - **Lobbying for Legislative Reform Favorable to Immigrants.** We continue to partner with PeoplePower West Chester.
- **Unitarian Universalist Pennsylvania Legislative Advocacy Network (UUPLAN).** David Long, who served as our UU Pennsylvania Legislative Action Network Congregational Liaison for three years, is moving away. Thank you, David. John Mason has agreed to take this position.
 - David Long represented our congregation at the UUPLAN annual meeting in Harrisburg October 6.
 - Tom Buglio co-chaired of the UUPLAN [Gun Violence Prevention Team](#).
 - Our congregation’s 2018-19 budget will allow us to become a [supporting congregation](#).
- **Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) Team.** Charlot Barker and Linda Sander
 - **Monthly Fellowtarian Updates.** Informed the congregation about UUSC’s work, action items, and how to make donations to the Emergency Burma Crisis Intervention Fund, the Hurricane Harvey Recovery Fund, for which UCWC raised \$1,914 in a special collection in September, and Puerto Rican hurricane relief (not UUSC).

- [Guest at Your Table Kick-off](#). November 19. Charlot spoke about UUSC at the Sunday service and RE children helped distribute Guest at Your Table materials.

Local Partner Projects

- [MLK Day of Service](#). Organized by St. Paul's Baptist Church. UCWC leaders: Ed Cohle, Shelly Case, and Sandy Schaal
 - The Stop Hunger Now food assembly project was in our building.
 - We contributed \$911 from the 2016 Social Action Trust Fund Grant and SJ Committee funds.
 - We don't have a count, but this event always has around 75 UCWC members participating.
- **West Chester Area Refugee Resettlement Project**. A coalition of local religious organizations and individuals. UCWC leaders: Lori Ratajczak, Education Chair, Shelly Case, Transportation Chair, and Nancy Artus, Temporary Housing Chair.
 - This is the second and final year that the WCARP helped the Congolese family from a refugee camp in Tanzania resettle here. The group has provided material, logistical, and educational support, and the family has made great strides. This summer, when their lease is up, they plan to move to Harrisburg, where there is a lower cost of living and they have friends. Thank you to all the volunteers and donors who made this success possible. Our congregation was a significant part of this community effort.

Local Projects

- **Fair Trade Coffee, Tea and Chocolate Sales**. Amy Spare, Coordinator.
 - Sales, which were suspended a year ago due to low turnover, are now officially ended. Fair trade products are available in grocery stores. Money in the Fair-Trade account were returned to the UCWC general fund. Thank you to all the people who ran this program over the years.
- [Safe Harbor Meals](#). **Sharon Mayer Conroy, Coordinator**.
 - Volunteers provided monthly dinners to Safe Harbor Shelter residents.
- [Share the Plate](#). Emily Sweet and Kathryn Severson became Co-Coordiators in November. Thank you to Beth Daniels, who worked behind the scenes for five years making sure our Share the Plate program runs smoothly every month.
 - In addition to donations (See Social Justice Donations Report for results.) this program also informs our members about local organizations that help people in the local community, and sometimes it inspires them to volunteer.
- [West Chester Food Cupboard Support](#). Stephen Sander, Coordinator
 - UCWC members make food and financial donations and volunteer at the Food Cupboard.

Liaisons & Ad Hoc Activities. Liaisons inform us of events and actions led by their respective local organizations and lead our participation in these events as well as hosting events at UCWC.

- **Climate Justice (CC Chapter of Citizens Climate Lobby)**. Matt Zencey
- **Gun Safety (Gun Sense Chester County)**. Tom Buglio
 - **Events Organized Outside UCWC:**
 - ◆ **Fundraising Concert for Coatesville Gun Buy Back**. September.
 - ◆ **Gun Violence Awareness Day**. Rally and march to Calvary Lutheran Church for a T-shirt installation. September. Led by the Religious Council of West Chester in coordination with Heeding Gods Call.

- ♦ **Response to Las Vegas Massacre.** March from United Methodist Church in WC to Rep. Costello's office to deliver a letter demanding action on gun violence. Organized by the Religious Diversity Council along with several churches, Heeding God's Call, and Gun Sense.
- ♦ **Sandy Hook Commemoration Event at Melton Center.** December 9. Music supplied by Judy Perri and Craig Talbot.
- ♦ **"March for Our Lives"** (March 24, noon at the Chester County Courthouse) to support the Florida high school students' new movement demanding better gun safety laws.
- **Events At UCWC:**
 - ♦ **"No Safe Place" Sunday Service.** November 26. Led by Tom Buglio.
 - ♦ **Memorial to the Lost.** May 19. The T shirt memorial on our lawn names victims of gun violence in Chester County over the past decade. We are the third religious organization in Chester County to host this Heeding God's Call project. The dedication ceremony, led by Rev. Dan, included prayer, music, and speakers, including the family of Eric Brown. [See the Daily Local News article](#) for details. Led by Tom Buglio, Gun Violence Prevention Liaison.
- **PFLAG.** Jon McCormack. PFLAG continues to meet regularly in our building.
- **Other Ad Hoc Events.**
 - **International Day of Peace.** September 2 at the Courthouse Steps. Organized by Chester County Peace Coalition. Barbara and David Long were the contact people for UCWC participation.
 - **Puerto Rico Maria Fund Collection.** Raised \$965 plus the collection of baby food, diapers, and bottled water. Organized by Pam Baxter, DLFD.
 - **[Transgender Day of Remembrance Vigil and Community Discussion.](#)** November 20 at UCWC. Led by Rev. Dan and Carrie Sandler. Transgender Day of Remembrance Vigil and Community Discussion. November 20. 25-30 participants. Carrie did a great job pulling in coalition partners and participants from the LGBT activist and trans communities. Only a few UCWC folks attended.
 - **New England Peace Walkers.** Potluck, presentation, and home hospitality. April 3. It was moved from UCWC to the Melton Center this year because our social room was already booked. Led by Barbara Long. This annual event is a joint effort with the Chester County Peace Coalition.
 - **March for the Environment, Earth Day.** April 22. The rally at the Courthouse Steps was opened and closed with song and a few words by Rev. Dan. Speakers included West Chester Mayor Dianne Herrin (UCWC member). The rally participants marched to UCWC where over a dozen environmental groups had set up tables with literature and activities enjoyed by kids and adults. Over 110 people enjoyed the festivities at UCWC. See the [Daily Local News article](#) for details.

—Submitted by Linda Sander, Social Justice Committee Chair

Addendum:

Two Late June Events in Support of Immigrant Families

The Sanctuary Congregation Team rallied UCWC members to attend demonstrations at the Chester County Courthouse on Sunday, June 24, and Saturday, June 30 to protest the separation and detention of families who crossed the border to seek asylum and to support the immediate reunification of families already separated. The Team made an announcement during Sunday service, distributed fliers, and posted information in Connections. Rev. Schatz spoke and sang at the Saturday demonstration. Many UCWC members attended these events. Also, Dianne Herrin, UCWC member and mayor of West Chester, spoke strongly in support of immigrants, and Tom Buglio was an event organizer and musical performer.