

## Social Action Committee 2021-2022 Annual Report

The goals, work and activities of the Social Action Committee are aligned with and fulfill the UCF Vision Statement---“to be a visible presence in the community” and demonstrate “growing a just world through compassionate action.” Due to the COVID pandemic and construction of our new facility, we continued to meet virtually until our May, 2022 meeting. The following are the 2021-2022 Social Action Committee Goals:

1. Provide and improve communication about Social Action activities to the congregation and the community through multiple outlets including, but not limited to, Facebook, the UCF website, newsletters, and Orders of Service.
2. Sustain and enhance existing interfaith and community partnerships and identify opportunities to develop new relationships with groups and communities to work for desired change.
3. Collaborate with the Adult and Children’s Religious Education Committees to identify areas of focus and action steps to address Social Justice Priorities.
4. Ensure Social Justice action steps are aligned with Social Justice priorities and areas of focus.
5. Evaluate the balance of Service (direct help to those in need, either through monetary support or time and effort) and Action (working to change the system through advocacy, rallies, calling representatives, etc.) activities.

Below is a list of this year’s activities with a brief description of each.

- UCF Strategic Planning— Social Action Committee spent time reviewing the feedback received from the Constructive Conversations focus group. The committee requested to change the name from Social Action to Social Justice. A long-term member summarized the committee’s name changes over time as going from “being nice” (Social Outreach) to “being strong” (Social Action) to “demanding and advocating for change” (Social Justice).

A Social Justice template was developed and includes:

- 8 Social Justice Priorities—Economic, Voter Rights, Racial Justice, Diversity/Equity/Inclusion, Criminal Justice, Healthcare, Environmental (covered by Green Sanctuary), and Immigration.
- Action steps for each Social Justice priority
- Partnerships with UCF committees and community groups for each priority.
- An overall communication and visibility strategy for UCF’s Social Justice

It is anticipated that this document will continue to evolve and that it can be used as a planning, tracking and reporting tool.

- 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Collections—UCF members and friends continued to demonstrate an amazing level of generosity during this challenging year. Our 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday collection amounts were:
  - August 29, 2021 Carteret Long Term Recovery Alliance---\$1593.56
  - October 31, 2021 Holiday Giving - \$2726.80
  - January, 2022 Food Pantries--\$1540.08 – split between 8 pantries in county
  - May, 2022 NAACP and Citizens for Diversity in Education Scholarships approximately \$1300.
- UU Justice North Carolina (UUJNC)—Social Action continues to develop and strengthen partnerships through statewide and regional opportunities, many facilitated by UUJNC. UUJNC provides weekly action items for various social justice issues which are sent to all members and friends of UCF in the weekly updates.

- Voter Rights—UCF will continue to participate in nonpartisan efforts to protect voting rights, promote voter registration, and get out the vote (GOTV) efforts including UUtheVote. UCF co-sponsored a voter registration drive at Carteret Community College from Sept. 27-30.
- Family Promise—UCF is a Support Church for Family Promise, a local program for homeless families and children. UCF committed \$250/quarter to help fund the costs of services provided by Family Promise.
- Domestic Violence Program—UCF provides financial support \$100 to the Domestic Violence Program and is listed as “100 People for Change.”
- Holiday Giving—Through the generosity of UCF, we were able to provide the following for Project Christmas Cheer and Holiday gift bags:
  - Project Christmas Cheer – Seven children were adopted and provided gifts.
  - Gift Bags –Sixty-five gift bags were given to participants at Beach House and Hope Mission. These bags contained a homemade scarf or hat, a greeting card and a Wal Mart gift card. Several families from Carteret Long Term Recovery Alliance were also provided gift bags.
  - EMPOWER (formerly Station Club) –Again this year, COVID prevented our annual Caroling Party but it did not prevent UCF from supporting members of EMPOWER. UCF provided gift bags with handmade items along with snacks and drinks for a Christmas party.
  - Twisted Sisters—This group continues to support UCF’s Holiday outreach by providing hundreds of handmade hats, scarves, stuffed animals and bags. As a thank you, UCF will host a tea party for the Twisted Sisters group.
  - Extra handmade hats, scarves, and blankets were given to the Morehead City Police Department for those in need.
- Carteret Long Term Recovery Alliance (CLTRA)—UCF has supported CLTRA since this nonprofit organization began after Hurricane Florence in October, 2018. In addition to helping people recover from this disaster, our relationship with CLTRA has helped to develop and strengthen relationships with other churches and community-based organizations.
- Antiracism—There are two subcommittees leading our work around antiracism. The Anti-racism reading group (ARRG), a subcommittee of Adult RE, is working to expand our understanding of systemic racism and what it means to be an anti-racist. The Racial Justice Group, a subcommittee of Social Action, is working to advance and adopt the 8<sup>th</sup> principle.
  - ARRG---This group has met for several years and currently meets every other month to discuss a shared reading. Several of the books for this year include:
    - Breathe by Imani Perry
    - You are Your Best Thing by Tarana Burke and Brene Brown
    - Me and White Supremacy by Layla F. Saad
    - The Water Dancer by Ta-Nehisi Coates
  - Racial Justice Group—This group was started in the Fall of 2021 and meets on alternating months with ARGG.
    - The Social Action Committee unanimously approved moving forward on educating and communicating with the congregation about the 8<sup>th</sup> principle.
    - On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, ten UCF members attended a statewide webinar on Adopting the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle, led by Paula Cole Jones, one of the authors of the Principle. We are collaborating with other congregations in NC to help each other through this process.

- Social Action hosted the video, *“Racially Charged: America’s Misdemeanor Problem.”* Forty-eight people attended including members from 13 UU churches across NC.
- Two leaders from Racial Justice and ARRG participated in the 6-week workshop on racism hosted by the UU Church of Raleigh.
- Several UCF members participated in the January 6<sup>th</sup> “Eugene Goodman Appreciation Day.”
- UCF members attended and participated in the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration.
- Ten UCF members attended a statewide webinar on Adopting the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle, led by Paula Cole Jones, one of the authors of the Principle. We are collaborating with other congregations in NC to help each other through this process.
- Carteret County Food Waste and Recovery Initiative: Numerous UCF members and friends have worked with the Food Waste and Recovery Initiative to deliver food and hold food drives for Carteret County Food Pantries.
- Sister Communities of San Ramon Nicaragua(SCSRN)—UCF provides financial assistance for SCSRN specifically designated to co-sponsor a rural school. Additionally, several UCF members have previously participated in ecotours sponsored by SCSRN. Because of UCF’s sustained support, Beaufort and Morehead City are considered sister communities.
- Welcoming Congregation Renewal—The Social Action Committee developed a small group to begin working on renewing our Welcoming Congregation status. This group agrees that while receiving this renewal is important, it is essential that these practices are the culture of UCF. The 5 practices to renew our Welcoming Congregation status and our current progress on each are:
  1. Become A Welcoming Congregation—Done in 2006
  2. Welcoming (LGBTQ+) Worship Services— min. of two a year. April 24, “Radical Welcome”, June—June 19<sup>th</sup>--Juneteenth (intersectionality), October—LGBTQ+ History Month
  3. Welcoming Days of Observance—min. of 6 a year. March 31—Trans Day of Visibility, June—Pride Month (Pulse and Stonewall)
  4. Welcoming Religious Education—min. of one a year. March 31—Side with Love and the Trevor Project hosted Combatting Anti-Trans Legislation 101, June 14<sup>th</sup>—UUJNC and South Carolina UU Justice Alliance are hosting Transgender Justice and Inclusion, August-Sept...UCF to host 6 session class called “Transgender Inclusion in Congregations.”
  5. Support LGBTQ+ organizations—Requirement to support through time, talents and/or finances.
    - Crystal Coast Proud is a new, non-profit organization in Carteret County with the mission to spread the message of equality and inclusion through outreach, events and community support. Several UCF members participated in Crystal Coast Proud’s night out to support Carteret Coats for Kids. UCF hopes to support this group as they grow and develop in our community.
    - Social Action’s budget has included funding for Welcoming Organizations since 2014. This year we selected the Dr. Jesse R. Peel LGBTQ Center and Equality NC.
- Other Financial Donations—The Social Action Committee approved and allocated funding for additional community groups aligned with our UU principles, UCF Mission and Vision and the Social Action Goals. These include groups dedicated to immigration, animal protection, ethical eating, and the homeless and hungry.

Several projects were suspended due to COVID and currently have not been restarted for various reasons including No One Dies Alone and the mentoring program at Newport Middle School. We are looking forward

to beginning UCF Service Days in the upcoming year. UCF members and friends, as willing and able, will be encouraged to participate in service days for community organizations.

The Social Action Committee will continue to build and strengthen partnerships with individuals and organizations in our community and with other UU's across the region, state, and country through our work with UUJNC. We are grateful to the congregation, the Finance Committee and the BOT for continuing to fund these worthwhile causes and events.