

Mini-History: Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network -- A Partner for Justice With First UU of Ann Arbor

Introduction

Social justice, as it says on your website, is at the core of your congregational identity. Over its 150 year history, ministers and lay leaders of First UU Congregation of Ann Arbor have been pioneers for justice in the Ann Arbor community and in the wider world. They have taken action on issues such as hunger, poverty, protecting the environment, standing up for civil rights, working for LGBT rights and marriage equality. I deeply appreciate the values held by members of your congregation and their willingness to be leaders for justice.

Shared Justice Goals/Shared Leadership

Over the past 12 years, the Michigan Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Network, also known as "MUUSJN", has drawn wisdom from your congregation's leaders and has been a resource for achieving your congregation's justice goals. Our Network has held up the good work of the First UUAA as a model for other UU congregations. MUUSJN is grateful to many members of this congregation. Special thanks to: Kate Warner, who has served as Co-Chair of MUUSJN's Board of Directors; Joan Burleigh, who works closely with MUUSJN and Interweave to further LGBT welcoming and advocacy; and Roberta Allen, who volunteered to be our Network's treasurer.

Our Common Justice History

Members of your congregation have worked with MUUSJN on: LGBT rights and marriage equality, reproductive justice, health reform, poverty, environmental justice, immigration and prison reform. The UUA and the UUSC awarded MUUSJN grants to raise the minimum wage. Your congregation helped the Network collect more signatures than any other volunteer group to pressure the legislature to raise the minimum wage to \$9.25/hour. By working together, we make a difference. We organize coalitions and conferences -- sometimes at your congregation. We bring together UU's to learn, to build relationships, and to build common ground for action.

Celebrate Shared Accomplishments and Plans for the Future

Over the years, activists from your congregation and MUUSJN successfully advocated for passage of the Affordable Care Act. MUUSJN published a Social Justice Cookbook that held up four of your congregation's justice programs as models for congregations in the UUA Heartland District. The Network partnered with Equality Michigan to organize an on-line pool of clergy to perform same sex weddings. Through MUUSJN's e-newsletter and action alerts, people in this congregation have been able to get timely information needed to advocate for justice and to celebrate when justice is achieved. I want to express many thanks to the people of the First UUAA for your ongoing support of our justice network. I thank you for today's shared plate collection dedicated to support MUUSJN. We look forward to working with you to reach our common justice goals. In 2015, MUUSJN priorities will be to work for reproductive justice, LGBT rights, the environment and Escalating Inequality, the UU A's new Study/Action Issue.

Presented Dec 7, 2014 by Randy Block, Director, MUUSJN