



**University Unitarian Church
Social Justice Steering Committee
2009-2010**

The role of the Social Justice Steering Committee is to help empower and support the social justice mission of the University Unitarian Church congregation, and to support and advise UUC's Social Justice Coordinator.

About UUC's Social Justice Program

University Unitarian Church has a long history and proud tradition of working for social justice and fighting against oppression. Our congregation has been working for nearly a century to make our community more just and compassionate through direct service, public witness, and activism. Our social justice program is grounded in UUC's goal of *awakening our members to the personal or spiritual growth they seek, and inspiring them to return the gifts of their transformation to UUC and their communities.*

Social justice work at UUC is conducted primarily by social justice ministry groups, made up of lay members and supported by a paid Social Justice Coordinator. These groups conduct their work under the auspices of the church, backed by the congregation's time, talent, money, and moral voice. They can be short-term projects or ongoing interests. Ongoing groups are asked to review their purpose and activities on a yearly basis and to provide updates on their membership, activities, and needs for congregational support.

UUC seeks to build a program with the structures, tools and culture that can truly empower social justice work. These supportive components include:

- ❖ A vision of a more just world, grounded in the Unitarian Universalist Principles
- ❖ A culture that invites participation and builds community and relationships
- ❖ Decision-making structures that balance creativity and nimbleness with sound stewardship of our financial resources and public voice
- ❖ Strong volunteer and staff leadership
- ❖ Clear expectations and support for people doing the work
- ❖ Connections between social justice and worship
- ❖ The ability to evaluate what we do and adjust based on what we learn
- ❖ Sustainable funding for our work
- ❖ Effective communication tools

The Social Justice Steering Committee plays an important role in fostering this supportive environment.

Duties and qualifications of the Social Justice Steering Committee

The *duties* of the Social Justice Steering Committee are:

- ❖ Support the Social Justice Coordinator by serving as a sounding board and advisor.
- ❖ Support the social justice work of the church by:
 - Overseeing the process for soliciting and selecting Second Sunday Dedicated Plate Collections for social justice causes.
 - Helping to plan social justice initiatives or events that are church-wide (cutting across multiple groups or issues). *For example: all-church social justice celebrations, “listening campaigns.”*
 - Helping to encourage and nourish leadership for the church’s social justice activities. *For example: Talking with congregation members about the social justice program; organizing or participating in orientation or training events.*
- ❖ Help to expand the social justice work of the church by:
 - Reviewing and approving the creation of new ongoing social justice groups. *There is an established church-wide process for starting new projects or groups. The Social Justice Coordinator assists groups in preparing their application, and the steering committee reviews and makes decisions; this can often be done via email.*
 - Helping the Social Justice Coordinator to evaluate and organize activities which do not fit within an existing social justice group, but which:
 - align with the interests of the congregation;
 - respond quickly to new or emergent issues; and/or
 - hold promise for catalyzing new social justice work at UUC.
 - Helping to expand the funding and activities of the Living Justice Fund, UUC’s dedicated fund for external social justice organizations and causes.

The *qualifications and skills* of Social Justice Steering Committee members include:

- ❖ Demonstrable commitment to social justice and to University Unitarian Church.
- ❖ Excellent listening and small-group discussion skills.
- ❖ Ability and desire to steward the “big picture” of the church’s social justice work, beyond any one issue or cause.
- ❖ Ability and willingness to meet six to eight times per year, and to respond in a timely manner to periodic phone or email requests for feedback.
- ❖ Ability and willingness to volunteer at church social justice events.

The *staff liaison* for this committee is the Social Justice Coordinator.

The *term of service* for Steering Committee members is one year, up to a total of three consecutive years. The committee will have no more than six members.