



**University Unitarian Church  
Social Justice Steering Committee  
2011-2012**

The mission 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 social justice program is grounded in UUC's purpose 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*. UUC's congregation works together in faithful community to shape a world that is just, peaceful, and in harmony with our environment. We seek perceptible progress towards justice by being reflective in our action; passionate in our leadership; authentic in our partnerships; and bold in our witness.

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. The Social Justice Steering Committee plays an important role in fostering a supportive environment that includes:

- ❖ 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

### **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:
  - Establishing the process and overseeing the selection of Second Sunday Dedicated Plate Collections and Seeds of Justice grant recipients.
  - 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 supporting external social justice organizations and causes.

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

- ❖ Demonstrable commitment to social justice
- ❖ A Voting Member of University Unitarian Church (or in the case of youth under 18, a child of Voting Members).
- ❖ 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 commit to a full church year of committee membership.
- ❖ Ability and willingness to meet monthly, 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 (generally following the church’s September-to-August operating calendar), up to three consecutive years. The committee will have no more than nine members.