

Social and Environmental Justice Council Prospectus

Approved by the UUCWI Board of Trustees, April 14, 2016

Edited 5/1/2016

Pursuing social and environmental justice

“The Universe is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects.”

~Thomas Berry

The Social and Environmental Justice Council (SEJC) within UUCWI strives to promote justice--moral principles guiding behavior based on truth, reason, fairness, and equality. The SEJC's activities are consistent with the initiatives of UUA, UUSC, and WA UU Voices for Justice. We:

- Foster the worth and dignity of all life by promoting social, environmental, and economic justice, and recognizing the interrelationships of all forms of justice;
- Promote the direct involvement of UUCWI to service, advocacy, and/or community organizing to create social and environmental justice in the larger community of Whidbey Island;
- Encourage connections among UUCWI, Whidbey Island, the Northwest region, and national and global partners for the purpose of social and environmental justice;
- Support a generosity of spirit and action in all aspects of our UUCWI community; and
- Respond to emergency or crisis needs as they occur.

We align with the United Nations Earth Charter and with Commit2Respond, a Unitarian Universalist religious response to raise awareness and mobilize action to address the crisis of climate change and the social justice issues it magnifies. We believe that social and environmental justice are deeply interrelated, impacting all and especially those with fewest resources.

Our commitment is to:

- Grow the climate justice movement;
- Advance the human rights of marginalized communities;
- Shift to clean and renewable energy; and
- Honor all life as interrelated.

Biennial Action Plan: 2015-16 [a two-year, rolling horizon for activities]

Content Areas:

Environmental Justice

- Climate Change is an Ethical Issue: awareness and education
- Determine regional and local focus (divestment and coal/oil trains, respectively, for example). Need to establish criteria for identifying and prioritizing focus issues

Social Justice

- Linkage between Environmental Justice and Social Justice: awareness and education
- Immigration = focus issue: Shifting politics, economics and land/climate viability spurs instability and movement of people from their traditional homelands to the United States to secure prosperity and quality of life. US economic structure encourages certain workers to support industry/services yet provides no or a murky pathway to citizenship.

Community Outreach and Support

- Dedicated Offerings: support to local organizations to promote social and environmental justice
- Emergency and Global Offerings: new element of dedicated offerings to support UUSC and local/national emergencies created by climate conditions and social emergencies

Actions:

- Monthly, or bi-monthly, SEJC forums (Sundays, following services) on specific topics that integrate environmental and social justice
- Three SEJC services annually which highlight SEJC activities, followed by a discussion forum after church for folks to ask questions and become engaged with the issue(s)

Action agendas for each of the three focus areas

- Commit2Respond enrollment drive: get every member of the congregation signed up
- Film series
- Recognize the UN Earth Charter
- Implement Greening Congregations commitments and participate in Ecumenical Group
- Blending with Social Justice: co-offering with Religious Exploration “Heeding the Call/Qualities of a Justice Maker” curriculum.
- Develop congregational resolution, perhaps in alignment with UUA resolutions?
- Endorse of the “International Treaty to Protect the Salish Sea”

Social Justice

- Education about the Tacoma Detention Center and our local immigration issues: film, homily, discussion forum
- Event in January (film, speakers from the detention center) to introduce congregations to the faces and experiences of those caught in the immigration conundrum; Resolution developed in conjunction with other UU congregations and UU Voices for Justice

Dedicated Offerings/Community Outreach and Support

- Tailor list of recipients to environmental and social justice priorities and possible forum topics
- Identify local partners with which to join on environmental and social justice activities; select one or two projects which support Whidbey Island residents

