

Social Justice Committee

At a moment when thoughtful people have felt compelled to become more involved in their communities, the UUCGT reinvigorated the Social Justice Committee this spring. With many topics clamoring for our attention, it took some time to find concentrations for our considerable energies. Through a series of discussions and workshops we have narrowed our focus to two main issues, Redistricting and Mental Health, and two side issues, Migrants and Healthcare. All of these are big subjects, and we have begun to plan activities to address various aspects of each.

Redistricting. There is strong interest in Michigan to have an amendment to the State Constitution requiring a non-partisan commission redraw voting district lines to replace the gerrymandered system currently in place. Over 300,000 signatures on petitions are needed for the amendment to be voted on by Michiganders. UUCGT Social Justice Committee members, being fair-minded and energized, are uniquely qualified to assist with collecting signatures for the petitions and helping to educate others about this important initiative. Members of the Social Justice Committee will be sharing information about this campaign over the summer.

Mental Health. While evidence of people with mental health challenges is pervasive, this is a topic we rarely address head on. It is good to start understanding mental healthfulness within ourselves before addressing concerns in our community. We will be hosting a series of activities to personally check in and encourage discussions starting this summer.

Migrants. The compassion that UUCGT members feel for the increasing tenuousness of migrants living in our area is strong. Our ability to help migrants with their daily stress is limited by our not wanting to draw attention to their situation. There are some groups in our area, such as the Justice and Peace Advocacy Center (JPAC), dedicated to this concern and we will support their efforts and follow their counsel.

Healthcare. Recognized at a workshop was that there are a number of congregants with professional and personal experiences in healthcare. We plan to create a system where UUCGT members with healthcare expertise can offer solace and advice to congregants in need of guidance.

The SJ Committee is still determining the best method of communication. SJ Co-chair Lynnette Rhodes generously gave much time and effort to developing a way for us to communicate through the platform, The Activist Hub. Look also for SJ activities on the UUCGT Facebook page.

Paula Jo Kemler
May 25, 2017