



Community Unitarian Universalist Congregation at White Plains

CUUC Social Justice Teams

Opportunities for You to Engage in Service

Updated October 2022

Our Social Justice Teams were created to allow the congregation to put into action CUUC's mission to "engage in service to transform ourselves and our world." Our faith calls us to this work, and we often feel a sense of fulfillment by helping others. In fact, many of us find our deepest connection to our UU values through social justice work. We encourage every congregant to join a team and support it as your time and energy permits. Which group calls to you?

~ Social Justice Coordinators: Jeff Tomlinson (jefftomlinson8@gmail.com), Emily Economou (emily.economou@gmail.com), Mary Cavallero (marycava4@gmail.com)

Democracy Matters

Our aim is to support and strengthen the democratic process. We engage with grassroots national organizations to write postcards and letters, and participate in phone banking, to inform and empower underrepresented populations in voter suppression states. We share information about early voting and local groups that support voters who need help to get to the polls to cast ballots. Contact Norm Handelman (yakman42@gmail.com)

Environmental Practices Group (EPG)

We focus on the earth, the environment that sustains life for all plants, animals, and humankind. Team activities have included promoting food scrap recycling within the congregation and the county; incorporating hands-on nature studies into our Religious Exploration classes; and sharing information on local environmental programs. We are exploring the new UUA Green Sanctuary 2030 program, which includes lowering our carbon footprint; transforming our culture to support long-term responses to climate crisis; and collaborating with frontline communities battling the effects of climate injustice. Contact Janet Bear (jsbear1@gmail.com), Charlie McNally (mcnally@pobox.com)

Hunger & Homelessness (H&H)

Hunger and Homelessness' kitchen volunteers have been preparing weekly meals for HOPE Community Services' soup kitchen since May 2020, as well as food trays for Open Arms men's shelter. For many years, H&H has provided hands on support to community agencies such as the Ecumenical Food Pantry, Coachman Family Center, and Furniture Sharehouse. They have also led the congregation in annual drives to collect gift cards, toiletries, warm weather accessories, gently used furniture and toys for individuals and families that are experiencing housing and nutrition insecurity. Contact Scott Damashek (scottdamashek@gmail.com) or John Cavallero (jcwpny@gmail.com)

LGBTQIA+ (*in transition*)

The LGBTQIA Social Justice Team explores Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, and Asexual justice issues, and the intersectionality with Racial Justice, Hunger and Homelessness, and Reproductive Justice. Team members have been speakers at our own Religions Exploration classes. We support local organizations like The LOFT LGBTQ+ Center, PrideWorks, and GLSEN Lower Hudson Valley. The team is in the process of reforming and expects to be active again later this fall. Straight and cisgender allies are welcome to help! Contact Jennifer Stevens (jenniferstevens11218@yahoo.com) or Mary Cavallero (marycava4@gmail.com)

Racial Justice/In the Spirit of Truth

The Racial Justice/ITSOT team has been designated for primary leadership in keeping the topic of racial bias in front of the congregation by engaging outside speakers and providing educational opportunities for CUUC regularly. We have sponsored discussion groups on books including *Breathe*, *Caste*, and *Defund Fear*, and presented an anti-racism webinar with the hosts of the online program *Race Talk Revolution*. Team members participate in events at the Martin Luther King Institute for Nonviolence, the NAACP of Greenburgh, and the Westchester Coalition for Police Reform, as well as maintain contacts with Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Westchester, and the Poor People's Campaign. Contact Jeff Tomlinson (jefftomlinson8@gmail.com)

Refugee Resettlement

Our mission is to assist the resettlement of refugee families in Westchester County. We work under the umbrella of the Interfaith Council for New Americans Westchester (ICNAW), a group of area congregations including CUUC. Over the last several years, we have assisted 11 adults and 12 children, including two babies born here. Our volunteers secure housing and furnishings, arrange doctor and agency appointments, tutor for ESL and school, provide local transportation, and orient newcomers to the community. We also support other local organizations such as Hearts & Homes for Refugees; engage in advocacy with our public officials regarding refugee matters; and help plan and participate in group social activities, clothing drives, and fundraising. Contact Robin Rocchi (robinandal@verizon.net) and Jane Dixon (lilrhodie@gmail.com)

Reproductive Rights (*now forming*)

"Our Unitarian Universalist faith holds central the inherent worth and dignity of all people, which includes a belief in the sacredness of all bodies, and the importance of self-determination and human agency. As part of a liberatory Reproductive Justice movement, we affirm our commitment to building a world in which all people are able to make choices about their bodies, their health, and their families within safe, thriving communities." ~ [Unitarian Universalist Association](#). To join or be added to the email list, contact Mary Cavallero (marycava4@gmail.com) or Terri Kung (terrikung@yahoo.com).