

**Minutes**  
**Social Justice Council at Cedar Lane**  
**Tues. March 11, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.**

**1. Opening and check in—Michael Benefiel, Co-chair**

After opening with a chalice lighting, Michael Benefiel invited everyone to give some expression to feelings about two programs supported by SJC the previous week with Rev. Louise Green, Director of Social Justice Ministry at All Souls Church and Alissa Glassman of Action in Montgomery. An impressionistic summary of the comments:

- Louise Green’s personal history as a dancer seemed to have informed her ability to lead social justice work through her flexibility in responding to our questions.
- Don’t forget to sustain yourself along the way
- Should Cedar Lane do the UUA’s Social Justice Empowerment workshop?
- Liked the presentation but feeling hopeless about getting more members of the congregation involved in peace activities given that she seemed to say we shouldn’t try. It seems that the Democrats may be “buying the war”
- She didn’t say forget about peace and anti-war activities, she said pick your time, suggesting after the election would be better
- What can we learn from AIM about house meetings and other strategies?
- We have an obligation to know more about UUSJ as well as AIM.
- As Treasurer interested in how All Souls gets their money and how they spend it on what people in church are working on and groups in the community.
- When our endowment grows, how will we use it?
- Do we need to get more people angry—more cold anger?
- “Anger is an Energy”
- Anger is one of the seven deadly sins.
- Isn’t cold anger destructive?
- Anger in the form of motivation and passion, focused outward can be empowering.
- Two approaches (Louise Green and Alisa Glassman) complimented each other but had similarities—networking & communication important—identify who is important and how to work together.

**2. Budget—Connie Nissley, Treasurer**

We determined that we don’t need to come up with a budget in time for the April 20 Congregational meeting. We discussed the draft budget in some detail (including a potential increase in the amount proposed for UUSJ and a new category called “New Initiatives”) but ran out of time and agreed to send recommendations for changes to Connie (along with roses!)

Heather suggested that our report to the congregation about this year’s activities include amounts raised for the Afghan dinner, partner church, alternative giving, donations through Bethesda House, Martha’s Table, Beacon House gifts, Manna Food, fair trade chocolate & coffee and volunteer hours. Mike shared that Connie Nissley will be

honored with a tree planted in her honor for her many years of service in the office.

### **3. Communications—Betsy Devlin-Foltz, Secretary**

To prepare the report from SJC for the annual report, Betsy will be sending a message to all task forces and liaisons to request their input by the end of the month. In addition to these reports, she will include information about some new communications mechanisms and applaud the interest in social justice from the wider congregation as expressed by contributions to the social justice endowment and the creation of the 50:50 plate sharing that is being piloted this spring.

### **4. AIM—Helen Strang**

Action is Montgomery is focused on getting money back into County Council Budget for 3 recreation centers in traditionally African American neighborhoods before the elected officials who agreed to this leave office. Actions have been held at all the recreation centers and a letter was sent to County Executive Leggett. An action is planned on April 2 at which 1000 people are expected.

### **5. Direct Service--Sandy Shaw**

Sandy spoke to junior high group about the community based shelter and is planning to work with them on an activity for the May 17 Day of Service.

### **6. Peace and Anti-War Activities**

Deborah Vollmer reminded people that the next McCaw meeting is on Wednesday, March 26 in Room 1&2 at Cedar Lane. Attendance has been very low at meetings. Deborah will make a flyer for lounge lizards table. The agenda will provide an opportunity to share info and ideas re Peace activism activities that are taking place. Heather will be preaching at the Fairfax church on Sunday where they have a Peace Cairn and will find out more about how their peace activism work connects to spirituality.

### **7. UUSJ JPD Conference—Pat Karlsen**

The conference will be held at the Doubletree Bethesda, March 28-30 “Voices of Justice, Hands of Change” Pat highlighted workshops on social justice and will send a list to all so those who attend can try to cover them. See [www.jpduua.org](http://www.jpduua.org)

### **8. LGBT Task Force--Marge Dimond**

The task force is planning a concert on April 6 with the Lesbian and Gay Chorus. Funds raised will defray the costs and be used to find a way to thank Cedar Lane’s staff for the support they have provided.

Post Bus trip, the advocacy continues through post cards, though significant opposition still exists and has spurred discussion of more moderate bill.

The task force will recommend a group to receive the 50/50 contribution—probably a group that works with youth.

The Marriage Equality sign has been defaced for the 10<sup>th</sup> time.

### **9. Closing-Heather Janules**

Heather observed that members seemed tired, that there were cupcakes waiting, and

reminded members of the council of the importance of choosing new members. Mike agreed to find out the answer to some basic questions such as how many members we need!

#### **10. Discussion on the 50:50 Plate**

In a post meeting conversation over St. Patrick's Day cupcakes ☺, the council discussed the 50/50 split including Betsy's frustration with the speed with which it is being implemented which has led to confusion about the process for choosing groups and communication with the congregation. Karen expressed the importance of having a successful pilot program. There seemed to be general agreement that the process of having each task force choose a group made sense for the pilot. Helen indicated that she will be submitting information to the newsletter and making sure an announcement is made during the relevant service. There was also some discussion about whether having SJC manage this project promotes the divide that some have observed between SJC and the congregation, or is an appropriate task for SJC to take on in the future with time for careful planning. To be continued...