

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Salem Social Justice in Action Team Purpose Statement

Mission: The Social Justice Action Team is guided by the UU values and seven principles. We also draw inspiration from the long tradition of social justice shown in UU and other faith communities. “Our mission is to provide a respectful home for intellectual, spiritual and creative exploration, and to build a community of fellowship, caring and service that lights the flame of social action.” (This statement is from our manual).

Purpose: The Social Justice in Action Team (SJAT) encourages members of UUCS congregation to engage in social service, social justice, and social action efforts consistent with the UU Principles. We strive to take action on crucial social justice issues that impact us locally, nationally and around the world.

The majority of the issues SJAT works on concern people, but we have also worked on environmental issues (climate change) and, most recently, lent our support for food to be grown on the UUCS property for the homeless, and needy.

The SJAT may represent the UUCS on issues in which the congregation has taken a stand, such as marriage equality, gender and sexual equality, and sanctuary for immigrants. When the SJAT feels called to take a position on its own it is made absolutely clear that team members are speaking solely for themselves and not the congregation.

Sanctuary:

- The SJAT may also respond to calls from the UUA to respond to certain, urgent social service matters. One such call was looking at the possibility of offering sanctuary to undocumented residents. After the UUA president issued this call in early 2017 the SJAT formed a subcommittee to develop a discernment process for the congregation to study and learn about the sanctuary process.
- Following numerous cottage and town hall meetings, the congregation voted May 22 for UUCS to become a sanctuary congregation. The SJAT is responsible for administering this sanctuary program, finding volunteers and maintaining open relationships with local immigrant rights groups, such as Causa, PCUN, Oregon Purple DACA Coalition, and Mano a Mano.
- With the UUCS not currently offering physical sanctuary to any undocumented person the SJAT is promoting an expanded view of sanctuary

that includes advocacy and legislative work, Know Your Rights training and various educational campaigns.

Who makes up the Social Justice Action Team? Co-chairs are currently Cecilia Craig and Sarah Rohrs. Those two set the agenda for monthly meetings and run the meetings. Cecilia and Caroline Bridges maintain the Social Justice Action Team table at Fellowship Hall. Michael Pollard is the chairman of the Sanctuary Team. We have 10-12 active members.

Functions:

- Holds a monthly meeting at UUCS to discuss current social justice issues, and to prioritize actions.
- Maintains an informational table in Fellowship Hall weekly on Sundays so people can pick up literature and fliers following the service, sign petitions and pledges, or make donations to Kairos Kitchen. We also have run special projects from the table, such as collecting postcards to send to the Trump White House.
- Publicize information on social service, social justice, and social action efforts with all team members and when appropriate, with the entire UUCS congregation.
- Coordinates the “Share the Plate Recipient” program which involves selecting community organizations that may need financial support, voting on possible candidates and scheduling them throughout the year. Individual SJAT members then contact organizations, and invite them to speak a few minutes before the congregation and have a resource table in Fellowship Hall. The Share the Plate program is one way UUCS can work with community groups and show that we care and want to help.
- Attends and has informational tables at various community events, such as the Gay Pride Day in Salem.
- Supports and promote KAIROS and Salem Interfaith Hospitality Network. Several SJAT members regularly help cook and serve meals to homeless families at the KAIROS lunch site. Team members also help out when SIHN families are staying at the church.
- Support and promotes our partnership with the Simenfalva Partner Church.
- Plan and coordinate the Cordon Road Stewardship program. Michael Pollard is the chairperson for this program which involves coordinating with Marion County to pick up trash on the roads around the congregation.

- Reaches out to community organizations, such as Causa, LUS, PCUN and Mano a Mano. The SJAT is also a partner with One Oregon, the political arm of Causa. Several team members also attend Willamette Valley Resistance Collective Social Service Team meetings.
- Attend rallies and protests with the UUCS “Standing on the Side of Love” banner. In the past year or so SJAT has attended climate change events, and rallies to show support for immigrants, undocumented youth receiving DACA and part of LUS. We’ve also brought the UUCS “Standing on the Side of Love” banner to show another point of view during pro Trump events.
- Arrange to have movies on social justice issues shown at UUCS, such as the Inside Peace documentary on a peace program inside a prison. The SJAT team also helped stage an event to foster greater awareness of transgender issues.
- Hosts Health Care For All and UU Voices for Justice annual conferences when they are held at UUCS. Attends UU Voices for Justice events when they are held in other cities.
- The SJAT also maintains a Social Justice calendar on the UUCS website so that congregation members and others in the community can keep informed on UUCS events and social justice events locally.
- Community events – Either collectively or individually SJAT members attend a variety of social justice and community events, such as 34 Days of Peace, and voter registration drives, and the Mid-Willamette Homeless Initiative Task Force meetings.
- **The SJAT has collected** household items (no clothing) for refugees relocating to Salem.

In the future the SJAT would like to deliver on its long-held goal of opening a social justice bookstore and maintaining a social justice book club. The SJAT will continue examining and considering ways to be more effective in reaching out to those in need, demanding social justice, and effecting positive and lasting change. We’d also like to attract more members.