

Social Justice Program FAQ Sheet

-- Frequently Asked Questions --

Q: How many people attend your church?

A: We have just a little more than 1,600 members and an average Sunday attendance of around 900 people.

Q: How many people are involved in the Social Justice Program at First Unitarian Church?

A: There are approximately 200 people who regularly attend Social Justice meetings. A far larger number participate in Social Justice events. For example:

- Over 700 people on a single Sunday signed our petition opposing going to war with Iraq.
- Over 600 people came to hear NY Times columnist Paul Krugman speak at a special Social Justice event.
- Over 400 church families participated in the 1-2-3 Campaign to Reduce Global Warming.

Q: How are decisions made regarding which social justice issues to work on or endorse?

A: There is a Social Justice Council, made up of the chairs of each of the ten social justice groups, which meets monthly with our paid Social Justice Director. This body is responsible for the direction of the Social Justice Program.

Q: What are the names of the social justice groups at First Unitarian Church?

A: They are as follows:

- Economic Justice Action Group
- Peace Action Group
- 7th Principle Environmental Action Group
- Downtown Homeless Action Group
- Beloved Community (which works on racial justice issues)
- Metropolitan Alliance for the Common Good (which works on community organizing through the Industrial Areas Foundation)
- UU Global AIDS Committee
- Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)
- Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC)
- Voter Registration/Education/Mobilization Committee

Q: How many new members list our Social Justice Program as being a major reason for joining this church?

A: Approximately 40%

Q: Why is the Social Justice Program so successful?

A: There are several contributing factors to the success of our program, including:

- Our church sees social justice work as part of its mission.
- Our church takes this mission seriously.
- Our church has a full-time Social Justice Director
- The senior minister, Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell, is highly committed to social justice work.
- We believe that for social justice work to be successful it needs to be grounded in love. This means that we try our best to refrain from being self-righteous or angry and we incorporate our shared spiritual values into everything we do.
- We organize a lot of community events and Portland, Oregon is a progressive city, by and large. Its citizens respond well to our quest for justice, equity and compassion and many end up joining our church as a result.

Q: How is the Social Justice Director's position funded?

A: The church has included this position in the church budget. In addition, we have received generous support for the Social Justice Program from the Veatch Foundation, McKenzie River Gathering Foundation, the Tides Foundation and other funders for social change.

Q: How can I find out more about the Social Justice Program at First Unitarian Church?

A: Please visit our church website, www.firstunitarianportland.org.