

New Brackett Church - SOCIAL JUSTICE Task Force Minutes – 2-22-22

Chair: Caron Chess

Scribe: Joanne Sterling

Attendees: Will Green, Anne Coughlin, Barbara Carter, Sarah Ingraham, Bill Oliver

Wabanaki Legislation – LD 1626 Update

Caron reported that the letter-writing session in support of LD 1626 was very well attended, with about 40 people attending. Peaks Island alone produced over 30 pieces of written testimony for the hearing. The Wabanaki Alliance had a goal of getting 500 letters of testimony and received over 1800! Caron is continuing to send updates to the people who attended about the progress of the bill.

MUUSAN CLL Meetings

Anne, Will, and Joanne take turns attending the Monday pm Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network (MUUSAN) Congregational Legislative Liaisons (CLL) on Mondays at 1pm. CLLs are the information pipeline between MUUSAN's Issue Groups and UU congregations. The four issue groups are:

- **Democracy in Action**, including efforts to strengthen our democracy by informing and engaging voters, protecting voting rights, promoting civil discourse, instituting Ranked-Choice Voting, supporting Clean Election laws and reducing the importance of money in campaigns.
- **Health Care**, including advocacy for universal health care, monitoring legislation that affects our healthcare system, and promoting public health interventions.
- **Climate Change**, including support for fossil energy conservation, development of solar and other renewable sources, and educating legislators and the public about the urgent call to slow climate change (with special attention to our own precious Gulf of Maine).
- **Racial, Native and Immigrant Justice**, addressing systemic oppression by advocating with and on behalf of racial, ethnic and indigenous populations and responding to the need to interrupt disparities in Maine's legal and economic systems.

Most of the work in the NBC SJ TF has centered around **Racial, Native, and Immigrant Justice**. Anne is working with the Communication Team of the Bridge Committee to include information about the SJ TF and CLL committee work.

The CLL meetings are a resource for us to think through our priorities. Here are some of the bills that MUUSAN is sponsoring in addition to LD 1626:

Anne also reported that there is a national bill (name ?) in progress that reduces the time before a new immigrant can begin work. She will call Chellie Pingree to encourage her to vote for the bill.

Here is the link to the CLL Resources page:

<https://www.muusan.org/cllhub.html>

Meals with Love

- Joanne reported that \$1200 was raised in the Meals for Love campaign for a donation to the Maine Immigrant's Right Coalition (MIRC) meals program.
- The group decided to meet after church 2-27-22 to write thank you notes to the people who gave for this campaign.

Meeting with Mike Sylvester

The group decided to invite Mike Sylvester to a Zoom meeting to discuss priorities. Dates we will offer for the meeting are March 21, 22, 24 at 4, 5, 6 pm.

Joanne and Betsey will write the letter and Rev. Will will review it.

A tentative meeting date was set for March 15 to plan the meeting with Mike Sylvester if he confirms one of the dates/times.

SJ TF Priorities

The group agreed that two of the priorities should be:

- Following the Wabanaki lead on Wabanaki issues
- Immigrant relief and justice

Caron will talk with Priscilla or Thurl about what St. Luke's is doing for their immigrant family.

Will will talk with the Jewish Social Service Agency about their work in this area.

We will continue about priorities at the next meeting.

Next Meeting Mar 22 at 4PM via zoom.