

	<h1>Social Justice Forum</h1>	<p>UU Church of Augusta Social Justice Committee</p>
	<p>Justice is conscience, not a personal conscience but the conscience of the whole of humanity. Those who clearly recognize the voice of their own conscience usually recognize also the voice of justice. -Alexander Solzhenitsyn</p>	<p>Volume 11, Issue 8 November, 2005</p>

Feeding the Flames of Social Justice



We had a great turn out for the Social Justice Empowerment Workshop November 19-20 at the church. Our goal was to have at least 40 members participate; we actually had 43 different attendees. We had a diverse crowd ranging in age, gender, and length of time at the church. Many thanks to all those who helped set up, clean up, bring wonderful desserts and soups—making the workshop flow smoothly.

Friday night we gathered around the table for dessert and a discussion of how our church has been involved in social justice activities over the past 50 years. Several newer members indicated that it was helpful to see and hear about past events in the church. The timeline also provided a sense of continuity. We then brainstormed what we considered to be strengths and weaknesses in our current social justice ministry and participated in small group discussions around these issues.

On Saturday, we spent time focusing on issues specifically related to our church. Cynthia led us in a guided reflection designed to help us discuss conflicts from a point of affirmation. Charlie led us through the opening pages of the Social Justice Empowerment Handbook—highlighting characteristics of UU churches involved in

successful social change ministries. In addition, we discussed Richard Gilbert’s model for integrating the four dimensions of the religious life in the church: (1) The church as worshipping community, (2) the church as caring community, (3) the church as a community for life-span religious education, and (4) the church as a community of moral discourse and action. Social action is not the sole reason the church exists, but it is one very important dimension of the church’s life. And all of the members of the church need to recognize its importance and support efforts for effective programs.

After lunch, we broke into small groups to discuss four main areas: 1) Committee organization, 2) Process for setting priorities, 3) Publicity/Communication procedures, and 4) Developing a Anti-racism Task Force Action Plan. The groups met for 30 minutes and then reported back to the larger group. Recognizing that additional time was needed to finalize the suggestions, each group will continue to meet (Members not able to participate in the workshop discussions are invited to join one of these groups.)

Contacts:

Committee Organization: David Nelson

Priorities: Greg Davis

Publicity: Sam Booher

Anti-Racism Task Force: Gayla Keesee



Guest at Your Table

30 Years of UU Faith in Action

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is our own UU human rights organization. Its work puts our most basic Unitarian Universalist principles and values into action. By participating in Guest at Your Table, you support the efforts of the UUSC and celebrate how – together – we can advance justice, compassion, and the power of hope by putting our UU principles into action. Your participation today is crucial. The work of UUSC is largely supported by contributions from UU individuals.

All donations count toward UUSC membership. Simply complete the form on the bottom of the box and return with your check. Memberships run for 12 months from the month the gift was received. Memberships start at \$10 for youth and students and \$40 for general memberships. Although you can become a member at any level, gifts of \$75 or more from individuals or families are eligible to be matched by the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock, New York. Congregations that raise \$2000 or more through Guest at Your Table will be recognized in the special UUSC honor congregations section of the UU World.

Return Filled Boxes: January 8.
We will have a special potluck luncheon to celebrate.



Augusta Urban Ministries White Christmas



This year the church has adopted 2 families (ten children) in the CSRA through the Augusta Urban Ministries' White Christmas program. Requested items include clothing, toys, household items, etc. Please take a gift tag from the wall in the hallway. Remember to record your information on the donation sheet. Please do not wrap your present—just label it with the child's name.

The deadline to bring items in to the church is **December 11**. Donations will be distributed the week of December 11-17. Anyone interested in helping sort items and/or deliver them on December 17, please contact Gayla Keese (414-6515).

UUSC Stories of Hope

UUSC works to defend people's right to work in dignity for a living wage and their right to organize to defend their rights in both the international and national contexts. UUSC specifically addresses how issues of race, class, and gender render particular groups of people vulnerable to economic injustice and supports the struggles of these groups both to achieve access to a living wage and to defend their labor rights.

In the fall of 2001, Jimmie Martinez learned that his employer, Furr's Super Market, was going out of business. Soon after, he learned that his particular store in Santa Fe had been purchased by Lowe's, an anti-union firm. When Lowe's reopened the store, it refused to hire back most of the union people, and the salaries were reduced from the \$10 to \$16-an-hour range with benefits to the \$6-per-hour range without benefits. Jimmie was angry!

Jimmie was a city councilor in Santa Fe, as well as a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers. He joined with others in the community to form the Santa Fe Living Wage Campaign. After a spirited campaign that involved a wide range of activists from community, religious, civic, labor, immigrants' rights, civil rights, and advocacy organizations, a living wage ordinance passed the City Council 7 to 1. But the struggle continues. The issue has been taken to court by the New Mexicans for Free Enterprise. UUSC has joined a group of social justice organizations in filing a friend of the court brief in support of the City of Santa Fe and its living wage ordinance.



The UUSC Coffee Project

is an innovative way for our congregation to address a consumer dilemma by buying coffee, tea and chocolate that is fairly traded. Through the project, farmers and their families earn a fairer share of income, have access to credit and technical support, and gain a trading partner they can trust, a fair trade organization called Equal Exchange.

Coffee sells for \$8.00/bag. We have Café Salvador, Tanzanian Jubilee (ground and whole bean), Hazelnut Crème, French Vanilla (ground only). We also have baking cocoa and hot chocolate (\$5.00/can). We have three organic teas (green, Earl Grey, and Breakfast Blend) for \$5.00/box.

Decaf and Dark Chocolate bars were backordered.