

A celebration of five decades of historic and effective social justice activism

Members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Rockville have been active in social justice activities since the church was founded. Members and friends of the church who attended the “Social Justice Empowerment workshop” in January 2003 compiled the following chronology of social justice issues and actions by decades from 1950 to the present.

1950's

1. Integration of housing and public accommodations.
2. Improvement in housing in Rockville and Montgomery County – such as Avery Road, Lincoln Park, Scotland, Toby Town, Ken-Gar and Olney (poor segregated African American enclaves).
3. Racial balance in Rockville Montgomery County Public Schools.
4. Sponsored a forum on nuclear disarmament with Norman Thomas as speaker (a prominent socialist who often ran for president)
5. Church members active in Rockville Government – mayor and council.
6. Concern about attracting more African Americans to the church.
7. Debates on limits of Social Action in the church's name.

1960's

1. Congregation split over the Vietnam War.
2. Anti-Vietnam war demonstrations in Rockville and DC.
3. Martin Luther King march on the mall (1963).
4. Fair housing demonstrations.
5. Cesar Chavez grape boycott.
6. Supporting Minister Bill Moor's work for prison reform.
7. UCR members go to Selma, Alabama (1964) to march for civil rights.
8. African American high school students from Henry Hudson HS in Selma, Alabama visited Rockville after our trip there without support from our church – the Rockville black community put them up.
9. Helping the children in Sunday School deal with the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King.
10. The Religious Education curriculum dealt with religious issues in developmentally appropriate terms, but in Euro-centric terms with no minority depiction.
11. Children helped with clean-up in Toby town and Scotland (poor black communities)
12. Adult concern that the LRY (Liberal Religious Youth) was indifferent to social problems, drug use and permissive sexual behavior.

1970's

1. Continuation of Vietnam peace marches and other war protests
2. Continuation of Minister Bill Moor's work for prison reform; participation in workshop on criminal justice
3. LEGICUUM (early county/city effort about legislating social justice issues)
4. Information and protest on Central American wars (Marilyn Moors)

5. Gray Panthers – advocacy for healthcare, nursing, home care, and housing issues
6. Interfaith and inter-racial worship
7. Church hosted and supported very popular D.C. area singles event “Discovery” every Friday night.

1980’s

1. Church becomes founding member of UU Affordable Housing Corporation (UUAHC) and contributes time and money
2. Members bring meals for Chase men’s shelter
3. Memorial dinner for medical research
4. Started AIDS fund. Held AIDS education forum for the community.
5. Marched in largest pro-choice demonstration
6. Escorted women through lines for planned parenthood appointments (pro-choice issues)
7. Debated and voted on Central America Sanctuary activities.
8. Intern Minister Don Robinson founds Beacon House as a Community Ministry.
9. Fund raising for remodeling the church included mandatory 5% contribution to Social Justice Fund.
10. Donated space to the Washington Pastoral Counseling Center.
11. Religious Education (RE) programs: Mitten Tree, Guest at your Table, Trick or Treat for UNICEF
12. RE classes made food supplements for shelter.
13. Racial justice as part of the RE program.

1990’s

1. Social Justice groups reorganized into task forces such as Housing and Homelessness, Hunger, Beacon House, UUSC,
2. Church votes to become a founding member church of Action In Montgomery (AIM).
3. Church votes to become a “welcoming congregation” for gays and lesbians.
4. Kid’s workshop on environment
5. Teens participate in soup kitchen – Lord’s Table in Gaithersburg
6. Kids bring desserts for Community Based Shelter
7. “Wonderful Wednesday” programs on Peace, Environment, Nuclear Disarmament.
8. Chase men’s shelter paper goods drive
9. Women’s shelter – monthly food for a week.
10. Beacon House monthly visits – crafts, tutoring children in reading.
11. Church members on boards of Community Ministries of Rockville and Community Ministry of Montgomery County
12. “Thanksgiving in February”, members eat out together to help the hungry.
13. Music Committee holds 3 benefit concerts/year for various social justice causes.
14. Race relations task force disbanded.
15. Tony Cohen speaker on underground railroad in Rockville.
16. Individual members work with Habitat for Humanity,
17. UUSC work camp on Indian reservation
18. Race for the Cure – Avon Breast Cancer (some ran, some sponsored)
19. Church becomes founding member of the Interfaith Alliance

20. Local chapter Amnesty International meets at the church, several members are very active.
21. Members hosted a monthly “Political Forum” for 2 years to educate others about religious intolerance as a reaction to the Religious Right.

2000

1. Our hymns and choral music reflects emphasis on Social Justice.
2. Recognition, some special collections, social justice themes in the worship services.
3. Laura Huff, artist member, presented program of art work by homeless male artists in her class . Their art was displayed and the artists attended.
4. Support interfaith clothing center and friends of the library.
5. AIM members organized neighborhood meetings on affordable housing, mental health issues and all day kindergarten.
6. Members participate in “Shelter Walk” sponsored by Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless.
7. Kids collect \$ for Heifer International
8. Beacon house Saturday activities and gifts at Christmas
9. Church supports Partner Church in Romania – scholarship, minister exchange, money for computers, and electrical services, and visit.
10. UUCR hosts weekly AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) meetings.
11. Built house(s) for SRO Single Room Occupancy) men’s shelters
12. Youth demonstration on the mall re: homelessness
13. Support for ongoing peace activities: UU Ignite hospitality, 4 evening workshops,
14. Members participate in Million Mom March against gun violence.
15. Social Justice Capital Fund contributed \$ to Ardennes House for startup.
16. Church continues participation in UUSJ (UU Social Justice), UU Service Committee