

Map of What The Social Justice Committee Has Been Working On Since 2014

Issues	Education & Awareness	Practical Support	Local Level Advocacy by Individuals	Community Transformation & Alternatives	Active Resistance & Rapid Response
Gun Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8/14 Sermon - 12/14 Not One More Project T-shirt commemoration - 10/16 Propositions Education Forum: Firearms. Ammunition Sales - 12/16 NOMP & Moms Demand Action Candlelight Vigil, Documentary, & Panel Discussion - 6/4/17 Wear Orange Campaign Ribbons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12/16 Candlelight Vigil, Documentary, & Panel by NOMP & MDA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summer '16 Palm Springs City Council 3 Gun Safety Ordinances (MDA) 		
Prison Reform/Criminal Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10/16 Propositions Education Forum: 2 Death Penalty propositions; 1 Criminal Sentences, Juvenile Criminal Proceedings & Sentencing 				
Religious Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Islam Sermon by Imam Reymundo Nour 2015 - Sharps Documentary PBS - 2/17 Sermon by Rabbi Jules King 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share the Plate after 12/15 fire at Islamic Center of Coachella Valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discovering Islam Education Series series 2015-16 - Visits to Muslim Services, 2016 		

Racial Justice			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12/15 Black Lives Rally, Larson Court-house, Indio - 7/16 Black Lives Matter in the Desert Rally - MLK Jr. Unity Walk & event, Desert Hot Springs (yearly since 2/16) 		
Homelessness in the Coachella Valley	- Well in the Desert sermon (date?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal Care Kits for WitD (yearly, began spring 2016) - Socks on the 2nd for WitD (monthly, began 2016) - Xmas Gift Drive for Harrison House (yearly) - Collecting clothes for Well in the Desert - 6/4/17 Homelessness in the Coachella Valley (put on by Action for Societal Change) 			
Immigrant Justice	- 1/17 Solidarity & Sanctuary Webinar		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2/17 Declaration of Conscience ongoing sign up - 2/17 Palm Springs Sanctuary City Rally & related events (Courageous Resistance) - 5/1/17 May Day Immigration Rally 10 UUCOD Participants 		
Education	- 10/16 Propositions Education Forum: English Language Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food on the First for CVUSD Migrant Education Program families (monthly) - Xmas Toy Drive for MEP children (yearly) - Cooking & Serving holiday dinner for December meeting & handing out toys (yearly) 			

LGBTQQIA Equality	- 10/16 created Welcoming Community bookmarks		- November Pride Parade (yearly) - May Harvey Milk Diversity Brunch in Palm Springs (yearly, began 2016)		
Reclaiming Democracy/Voter Registration	- 10/16 Propositions Education Forum (see respective issues for propositions)	- 4/17 Action for Societal Change upcoming event at UUCOD	- 3/17 upcoming Post-card action		
Modern Day Slavery/Human Trafficking	- Fall 2017 Sermon on Human Trafficking	- Xmas Gift Drive for Human Trafficking SafeHouse of the Desert (yearly)			
Environmental Justice/Climate Change	- Green Sanctuary Congregation Accreditation & Re-accreditation - 10/16 Two Propositions Education Forum: Referendum to overturn Ban on Single-use Plastic Bags; Carry out Bags - Years of Living Dangerously PBS series 10-12/16				
Women's Equality/Reproductive Justice	- 1/17 event held at UUCOD in support of Women's March	-4/2/17 Women in Action Program (put on by Action for Societal Change)	- 1/17 Women's Marches throughout USA - 2/17 Planned Parenthood sponsored documentary at Mizell Center - 3/17 Persistence/Intl. Women's Day Rally		

Health Care	- 2016 Compassion & Choices Sermon	- 2016 Share the Plate - 5/12/17 ACA & Single Payer Program (put on by Action for Societal Change)	- 2/17 End of Life Rally at Eisenhower Medical Center (Compassion & Choices)		
Economic Justice	Red Nose Day Celebration - 5/22/16 - 5/21/17 76 participants	- All Red Nose money raised goes to support projects that ensure kids are safe, healthy, and educated, which are part of poverty reduction programs			

Levels of Activism

Below are the five different levels of activism, from least to greatest involvement and examples of each.

Education & Awareness: Informing ourselves and others is the starting point for all action. There are many ways to learn more about issues and what is happening in our communities. Some methods involve building relationships to learn about someone else's experience and perspective about community life and what needs to be done. Below are a few illustrations of how we might go about this:

- Study Circles: As a first step to prepare for action, hold a study circle. (Low capacity)
- Self-Assessment & Asset Mapping: Identifying all the assets – human, physical, and financial – that UUCOD might offer to grassroots groups organizing at this moment. (Low capacity)
- Yard Sign, Door-Mat Outreach: Distribute yard signs, grocery bags, or doormats that share a message of multi-lingual welcome and hope—*Standing on the Side of Love* or *We love ALL our neighbors*. Sell them at-cost to members of the congregation, or even go door-to-door giving them away and speaking to neighbors, building a list of those interested in future engagement. (Medium capacity)
- Host Speakers During or After Services: Invite leaders in grassroots organizations to speak about their campaigns and experiences; raise money for them with share-the-plate. In larger cities, organize rotating grassroots presenters to visit different congregations each Sunday. (Low to medium capacity)
- Community-Building Meals: Partner with local community institutions or groups to talk about issues that matter to people most, rotating among host sites. Facilitate an environment for conversations and relationship-building, without an organizing agenda. Plan for translation if you will have non-English speakers attending. The congregation should provide the meal or, alternatively, invite an immigrant or refugee community member to cater and pay them for their services. (Medium to high capacity)

Practical Support: This is a critical time to demonstrate solidarity with groups led by people most at risk in the current environment. Many of these grassroots groups have no paid staff and little infrastructure.

- Offer Free Space for Meetings and Events.

- Volunteer Child-Care: Organize a small group to provide free child-care at meetings and “know your rights” trainings for immigrants, Muslims, and other targeted communities so that parents can attend and focus.
- Fundraising: Talk to a grassroots group and identify a specific financial need (an organizer stipend; a vehicle; computers) that your congregation or cluster can commit to raising. Use it as an opportunity to raise awareness of the group and the issues they address, and keep track publicly of progress towards the goal. Faithify is a UU crowdfunding website you can use to help. (Medium capacity)
- Serve as a 501©3 Fiscal Agent: Many grassroots organizations have neither the capacity nor the desire to become official non-profits. However, being housed under one (including a religious institution) provides many benefits, creating opportunities to apply for grants and receive tax-deductible donations. (Medium capacity)

Local-Level Policy Advocacy: There is much that our local cities, counties, schools, and law enforcement agencies can do both officially and unofficially to refuse to cooperate with unjust national policy that targets people based on race, religion, or other identities. It is important to FIRST check with groups representing vulnerable communities about their assessment of the political environment and what they recommend. Without checking, trying to push for a certain policy might create an unfortunate backlash, making a situation worse by bringing unwanted negative attention and actions by officials. That said, here are a few examples of positive advocacy steps:

- School District Policy: Organize for your public school board to pass protections for undocumented students and families (“safe zones”), anti-bullying measures, and restorative justice practices to weaken the school-to-prison pipeline. (High capacity)
- Policing and Surveillance Policies: Cities with “sanctuary city” policies are safer for immigrants, through separating local police and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Other model laws protect mosques, and activists of color spaces, and social media from surveillance, and restrict racial profiling (High capacity)
- Hate-Free/Human Rights Zones: Work with local businesses, churches, schools, and cities to declare “Human Rights” or “Hate Free Zones” in which they pledge non-compliance with enforcement that violates human rights. (Medium to high capacity)

Community Transformation & Alternatives

This political moment has sparked a new wave of energy, opening up fresh opportunities for forging new alliances which birth alternative visions of what a just, sustainable, and welcoming community looks and feels like. In addition to protest and resistance, these times call on us to heal and transform social divisions, to create new policies, institutions, relationships— new ways of doing things. Here are a few illustrations:

- Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Aware of the often tremendous racial disparities in suspension rates, some congregations have hosted community dialogues with public school officials and altered school discipline policies to keep teens in school, enabling them to stay on a positive learning track. Other congregations have worked through organizing groups such as DART (Direct Action, Research and Training) to shift how juvenile courts handle low-level offenses. They have been able to introduce “civil citation” as alternative to arrest for youth offenders with minor offenses. This alternative punishment involves community service and counseling, and no permanent record. (High capacity if done alone; medium if doing this jointly.)

- Empowering Community Development” Individual and faith-based institutional investors (including congregational and denominational endowments) are directing funds to finance community and commercial land trusts, affordable housing, small businesses, and co-ops—injecting much needed financial resources in under-served neighborhoods, creating opportunities where there had been few before. There are many inspiring examples where the new housing, businesses and co-ops also bring great environmental benefits—as they are designed or renovated to have a low carbon footprint. The Evergreen Co-ops in Cleveland are just one example of what is possible. (High capacity if organizing; low to medium if just providing funds.)
- Alternative Gift Fairs: In December, many congregations turn a fellowship hall or other large space into a lively venue for music, socializing and “shopping” which supports the good work of non-profits near and far. These efforts help strengthen community ties, reinforce non-materialistic values, and generate much-needed donations for worthy causes. They also can serve as a meeting ground for grassroots groups’ volunteers, neighbors, and parishioners to get to know each other. (Medium to high capacity, depending on scale.)

Active Resistance & Rapid Response

This era will require all kinds of creative forms of active resistance and initiatives to “throw sand into the gears” of the federal (and possibly state) government’s attacks on our communities.

- Congregation-Based Sanctuary: “Sanctuary” means hosting immigrants targeted for deportation inside a church or temple because historically Immigration and Customs Enforcement has not raided religious institutions. You could also participate as a support congregation which provides everyday practical assistance to the host site. Every sanctuary case requires a whole community network and team – no congregation can do it on their own! To get started check out the New Sanctuary Movement’s Toolkit. As a first step you or your congregation can sign the pledge here. UU Congregations can reach out to Katia Hansen at UURISE (UU Refugee and Immigrant Services & Education) for guidance at katia@uurise.org. (High capacity: host; Medium capacity: support)
- Trainings for Active Resistance: Identify skills that members of your congregation and community may need, and then prepare yourselves for action by hosting or attending trainings on civil disobedience, bystander intervention, and de-escalation. Your regional office of the Unitarian Universalist Association can help connect you to training resources. (Low to Medium capacity)
- Rapid Response Networks/Sanctuary in the Streets: A whole cluster of congregations and community organizations in a local area can unite to respond to immigration raids and acts of hate. Organizations rooted in undocumented communities and others at high risk of hate crimes or profiling can distribute an emergency line number which multi-lingual volunteers can rotate answering. Following a call, the entire network is alerted. Rapid response volunteers should be trained in advance in de-escalation tactics, bystander intervention, abuse documentation, and know your rights. One of the strongest models, with over 1,000 volunteer responders, is based in Philadelphia. Rapid Response will not ever be a first step, and is only appropriate for places where some previous relationships and collaboration are already established. (High capacity)
- Bystander Intervention: Prepare yourself to confront and disrupt incidences of Islamophobia, xenophobia, racism, white supremacy, anti-Semitism, misogyny, homophobia and transphobia, bullying and hate speech as they occur in your broader community, including local schools, businesses, faith institutions, public places, and print and online media. A resource from UUSC with some helpful tips

on confronting hate speech can be found here, and here is a link to a quick video training offered by *Standing on the Side of Love* on intervention and de-escalation. (Medium capacity)

- Drown Hate with Love: Pledge that your congregation will do a “day of service” in every neighborhood that experiences a hate crime or immigration raid. When those occur, reach out to those affected and together design an activity that invites community interaction—perhaps setting up a garden, a free dinner, a community clean-up, etc. Pay for all costs. (Medium capacity)

Adapted from **Solidarity & Sanctuary: Options From Congregational Action** <http://uucsj.org/solidarity-sanctuary-options-for-congregational-action/>