

Good morning everyone. I am very pleased to be making the first UUC Social Justice Report of the new church year. Last March when the pandemic hit, I wondered how the UUC social justice work could move forward. The council decided to not meet again until September. I wondered if we couldn't meet together in person, protest in the streets and have events to raise money for good causes how could we do our work for justice.

When the council met virtually in September it became apparent that the work had not stopped at all. We recognized that the needs of the underserved and marginalized people did not stop during the pandemic did not stop but rather grew. With a little ingenuity and imagination UUC Justice committees continued their work. The UUC Refugee committee could not continue the ESL classes so instead they reached out to the Refugee families, built on the relationships that been established and gave them financial grants as jobs disappeared and life became difficult.

The Black Lives Matter committee used the summer to write articles in the Octagram to educate our congregation around the theme "History You Didn't Learn in School but Should Have". The committee welcomes ideas and authors for future articles from the congregation. If you missed any of these thoughtful articles you can find them on our Website on the Social Justice Page.

In August four of us held FAST virtual house meetings where over 30 of you attended. On Oct. 26st we will meet together on zoom with 40 other congregations for our Annual Assembly where we will vote on our issues for the coming year. The issues we are working on: to increase access to mental health, to expand affordable housing, to eliminate youth suspensions and to promote criminal justice reform have never been more important. So maybe we can't get together in large groups in person we can still move forward by using technology and creativity.

Migrant workers have been severely impacted by the pandemic. They are essential workers of course. We wouldn't have fresh produce without them. But there was no special program passed by congress to help them while they wait for the growing season to start. So maybe we can't have a luncheon to raise money for our annual beans and rice collection. Instead, this year we are collecting financial contributions to purchase food for the farmworkers and food will be

packaged for contactless distribution. We will not forget their service to our wellbeing. Contributions are still being accepted. Check your Octagram for directions for giving

And finally . We want to thank UUC for their generosity in donating to the Pinellas Education Foundation for school supplies. We raised \$575.00 for this worthy cause.

We do good work in our UUC Community for the common good. This year the social justice council is excited to look for new ways to do our work during this pandemic. We have begun meeting on zoom on the 3rd Saturday of each month. You are invited to join us. A just world is possible if we create it together.