

Social Justice Council Proposal for Social Action in 2023

December 4, 2022

The Social Council, consisting of Rose Gabe, Jan Federer, Kathy Juba, Clarice Krippner, Laura McGraw, Marcia Swift, Jim Wasta, and Jo Wasta recommends the following areas of social justice action in 2023.

We ask the congregation to continue our social justice efforts addressing racism, specifically with the African American, Indigenous People, and Afghan refugees. We will continue to advocate for implementation of the 8th Principle in our congregation which is only in its initial stages.

In 2022 we worked on electoral justice efforts and along with 12 other community groups formed the WeVote Coalition. Even though 2023 is not an election year it does not mean voter suppression will end. Therefore, we propose that the congregation continue to participate in our community's WeVote Coalition and address issues of voter suppression and the erosion of democracy.

In addition, we propose the congregation take some actions in the area of environmental justice in Iowa. There is increasing concern about the quality of the water and air in our state. People in marginalized groups are the hardest hit by pollution and poor water quality.

The Social Justice Council will take its directions from the votes of the congregation in affirming our five social justice issue recommendations and our First Sunday Plate Collection recipients. Social justice actions may take the form of forums, book readings and discussions, events, marches, protests, use of social media, executive, legislative and congressional lobbying, donations, business support or boycotts, etc. The methods will alter and will depend on what is happening in the local community and in the larger political and socio-economic society.

Peoples UU Church is known in the community and the state for its social justice actions and activists. The Social Justice Council cannot do the work on its own. We need our members of all ages to be active participants. For input into the 2023 Social Justice Council proposal contact us at pcusocialjustice@gmail.com.

PEOPLES SOCIAL JUSTICE
First Sunday Plate Collection 2023 Ballot

PLEASE VOTE FOR A TOTAL OF 4 - IN ANY CATEGORY

▪ **AFRICAN AMERICAN RACISM**

_____ **Gun Violence Intervention**

Victims and perpetrators of gun violence in our community are provided hope and options in visits to their own homes. These loving and supportive personal visits include representatives of social services, law enforcement, school officials, and trained community members. Outreach workers actively work to mediate conflicts and prevent retaliation to violence between those who are at-risk to commit or become victims of gun violence.

_____ **Peace Camp**

Planning to continue to offer this program again next summer for students grades 1-5, in its first year this past summer 48 students attended. 40% were Black and the remainder white. The purpose of the camp program is to learn at an early age about racism, stereotyping, allyship, systemic racism and institutions in ways these younger kids can understand. Students use hands-on activities to engage in learning experiences and literacy-based strategies related to promoting anti-racism. The program was hosted by St Paul's Methodist Church.

▪ **AFGHAN REFUGEES**

_____ **Catherine McAuley Center**

The Center has supported 250 Afghans in Eastern Iowa over the last year. Through Education Services and Refugee & Immigrant Services Programs, the Center offers one-on-one tutoring and small group learning opportunities for adults. Refugees and immigrants are provided with employment-readiness education, job-seeking support, and assistance navigating needed community resources. Peoples Church has previously supported the Center with FSPC donations.

_____ **Refugee and Immigrant Association of Linn County**

Former refugees assist newly arrived refugees offering assistance such as transportation, basic living necessities, and interpretation support at appointments. Programs of the Association include Refugee Women Empowerment, Academic Improvement for refugee youth and young adults whose schooling has been interrupted, transportation to school with an Association owned van and a Refugee and Immigrant Newspaper in languages such as French, Arabic, Swahili and English.

▪ **ELECTORAL JUSTICE/DEMOCRACY**

_____ **Human Rights Watch**

Integrity First America which successfully sued the Charlottesville protestors has folded its work into this national organization. With a network of human and civil rights defenders, veterans, and advocates this group challenges the extremist movement in the United States. Using their expertise in research, policy, law, technology, and national security to uncover the movement, expose its tactics, and uphold human rights.

WeVote Coalition

Peoples Church is a member of this local coalition along with 13 other community groups. This non-partisan partnership works on voter education, voter accessibility, voter registration, and voter turn-out. The Coalition assisted with organizing satellite early voting sites and provided education and registration opportunities at the Latino Festival and Asian Fest. Future project involves working with refugee and immigrant groups on understanding the voting process and providing access for registration and voting.

▪ **ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

Iowa Environmental Council

The Council is a nonpartisan alliance of diverse organizations and individuals who work together to protect and preserve Iowa's environment. The Council advocates for laws and policies that accelerate Iowa's transition to renewable and efficient energy; restoring Iowa's land and water by reducing pollution from urban and agricultural sources; and reducing carbon pollution shifting to low and carbon-free energy.

Rodale Institute

The Institute is undergoing a major research project on land leased from the Indian Creek Nature Center. Scientists are working to develop cropping techniques that produce a good yield while also eliminating erosion and runoff to rivers and streams to improve water quality. The project is finding ways to farm that sequester carbon in the soil, rebuild topsoil, and impact climate change.

▪ **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

Great Plains Action Society

Organized and led by Indigenous People so that Indigenous voices, values and practices can be heard in Iowa and the upper Midwest. Campaigns of the group include opposing CO2 pipelines; increasing voter turnout; opposing big-ag practices that harm the land, air, and water; and Truthsgiving. The group led the efforts against the Dakota Access Pipeline and continues to fight pipelines that threaten the Missouri River and Iowa's border to the east.

Meskwaki Cultural Center & Museum

Located in Tama, the museum displays artifacts and repatriated items of Native American heritage. The museum provides education and insight in the tradition and culture of the Meskwaki. The museum and cultural center hold free educational programs, workshops, tours, and presentations throughout the year. Through these events, the museum provides learning opportunities for its own members and the community at-large that preserve, protect, and honor the Meskwaki culture.