



Bi-Annual Report, 2016-2017

Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community

UUJEC-2701 West Fitch Ave. Chicago, IL 60645
www.uujec.com uujec@uujec.com

~UUJEC is a national organization striving to create a world of economic justice, equity, and compassion, recognizing the inherent worth & dignity of every person as set forth in our UU Principles. ~

Our History:

UUJEC has been in existence for over twenty-five years and has encouraged a focused response to systemic problems of economic justice. Early gatherings at Rowe Camp and Conference Center brought together a core of clergy and activists who wished to inspire congregations to work to create a more just society through study, education and action to address structures of national and global governance and society which buttressed economic injustice.

In 1989, UUJEC started a quarterly newsletter, *The Call*, and distributed an enhanced version of the UU Purposes and Principles in the language of economic justice. The group held a conference in 1993 in Los Angeles focused on human rights and, with over 100 people present, it marked the emergence of UUJEC as a nationwide membership organization.

Since its founding UUJEC has provided congregations with action-oriented materials through its General Assembly booth each year, local chapters and representatives, national conferences and more recently through its website and regional conferences. As a response to growing inequality in the distribution of wealth, both nationally and worldwide, UUJEC used its contacts and experience to develop and promote the Congregational Study Action Issue on “Escalating Inequality” adopted in 2014.

Subsequently, UUJEC developed its own curriculum for this CSAI and used its website to help distribute alternative curricula and materials developed by several UU congregations across the country. It has recently expanded its resources to include materials for UU engagement on the Corruption of Democracy CSAI.

Accomplishments Since 2016

1. Networked with congregations to assist them with promoting and providing educational materials related to economic inequality;
2. Organized the *Reversing Inequality: Healthcare Justice is a UU Value* Conference in Washington DC in April 2017, in collaboration with UU's for Social Justice;
3. Collaborated with congregations to engage members in letter writing campaigns to Senatorial offices on healthcare justice;
4. Facilitated virtual meetings between members and thought-leaders on healthcare justice and inequality.
5. Sponsorship of the inequality workshop at GA 2017 "Resist In Solidarity Against our Top-Heavy Economic System";
6. Expanded its social media presence via Twitter, Flickr and YouTube.
7. Engaged congregations and social justice committees by developing Economic Justice Spotlight feature articles with best practice approaches from UU's nationwide. The Economic Justice Spotlight Booklet was presented during GA 2017.

The Board is continually re-evaluating what we can realistically accomplish, how to build our membership and how to organize ourselves to best serve our congregations and promote our UU Purposes and Principles without major funding. We know that grants, especially from the UU Funding Program and Faithify, make a huge difference in what UUJEC can achieve so we will continue to pursue grants for our future work.

Conference Committee Report, by Chair Michael Teasdale

This year the Conference Committee focused on the Washington DC conference, *Reversing Inequality*. The conference was a great success as we had over sixty participants fighting for UU values for healthcare justice in the halls of the Senate. The committee developed the plan and worked with a partner, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice, to hold the conference steps away from the Capital and Senate offices. The conference featured Sister Simone Campbell,



Chuck Collins and several members of congress as speakers. Participants visited twenty-one senate offices to talk about current legislation and the need to extend care, not limit it. The conference committee also developed an agenda for the UUJEC board's annual retreat and a survey of members, asking for their opinion on key issues and opportunities for action.

UUJEC and UUSJ Co-Sponsored "Reversing Inequality Conference: Healthcare Justice is a UU Value", April, 2017

General Assembly: Program and Booth



UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UUJEC presence at the 2017 General Assembly included one UUJEC sponsored workshop “**Resist In Solidarity Against our Top-Heavy Economic System**” with noted UU speaker, author, and activist Chuck Collins. A display of information and literature was also available at our booth in the Exhibit Hall for the week.

Finance Committee/Treasurer’s Report, by Chair Jane Bannor

UUJEC ended 2016 with cash-on-hand of \$22,722. Our healthy bank balance was due to a multi-year grant of \$9,300 from the UU Funding Program (UUIFP) to help re-institute a paid part-time staff position and a successful annual appeal which raised approximately \$3,800. Total income during the year was \$27,335, which included \$2,030 in advance fundraising for the conference in Washington, DC in 2017. Total spending during the year was \$13,904.

In hiring an administrative assistant to provide 10-hours per week of compensated staff support, the UUJEC board committed to paying a living wage of \$15 / hour and paying associated government-mandated FICA taxes. Our web-site, mailings and flyers have benefited from additional staff attention.

Through May, 2017, Income for UUJEC totals \$28,616 with Expenses of \$21,455. Our 2017 annual fund appeal raised \$3,625, and additional contributions of \$500 have been received from individual UU congregations.

In April the organization held a successful conference and advocacy effort in Washington DC, focusing on healthcare justice. Expenses for the conference were covered by individual registrations, a grant from the UUIFP; two Faithify campaigns and the UU Fellowship of Door County, WI. Remaining conference funds will be used for follow-up phone conferences and one-day regional events.

Communications

UUJEC publishes a quarterly newsletter with articles on economic justice topics. Past newsletters have covered healthcare justice, UUJEC’s involvement in the GA, corporate power, fair trade vs free trade, book reviews, the loss of the middle class, and other economic justice issues. It is circulated via email to our 1800 subscribers and distributed to chapters, at conferences and at GA. Karla Chew is the editor.

Our website is maintained by our administrator, Rachel Bennett Steury, and webmaster Karin

Gates. It contains a blog, news, congregational economic justice activities and UUJEC membership information, among other things.

UUJEC Board of Trustees

The Board has been involved, not only with policy, but with implementation of programs. There is no way to track all the hours of contributions they have made. UUJEC is also happy to have Rachel Bennett Steury as our part-time staff person, thanks to financial support by the UU Funding Panel. She keeps the Board supported and informed and plays an active role in fulfilling the mission of the UUJEC.

The Board meets monthly and the Executive board meets monthly, by phone, and via video conferencing software. A two-day Strategic Planning Retreat was held directly before GA in New Orleans (2017). The grand objective arising out of the retreat was to further build our resources and increase our membership and impact.

Board Members serving 1-3 year terms are:

Jane Bannor	Evanston, IL
Jim Black	Ephraim, WI
Dr. Dick Burkhart	Seattle, WA
Karla Chew	Oak Park, IL
Diane Conrad	Corvallis, OR
Rev. Judith Deutsch	Sudbury, MA
Rich Florentino	Staten Island, NY
Rev. Ralph Galen	Lawrence, MA
Rev. Dr. Lucy Hitchcock	Sultan, WA
Woullard Lett	Manchester, NH
Terry Lowman	Ames, IA & Miami, FL
Virginia MacDonald	Brevard, NC
Maureen Maliszewski	Durango, CO
Kit Marlowe	Cape May, NJ
Carl McCargo	Springfield, MA
Sky Stewart	Franklin, OH
Colin Sykes	Corpus Christi, TX
Michael Teasdale	Newbury Park, CA
Dean Wanderer	Springfield, VA

It is the Board's intention to work to invite and implement much broader participation of its membership in economic justice work, via regular communication and working groups, and to invite their generosity in monetary gifts so that UUJEC can afford to keep its programs vital and effective.

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