

# Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community



## Annual Report, 2017-2018

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*~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 almost thirty 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 more than 100 people present, the event 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 also expanded its resources to include materials for UU engagement on the Corruption of Democracy CSAI and healthcare justice.

### **Accomplishments Since 2017**

1. Continued our Monthly Webinar Series on healthcare justice, tax reform and inequality;
2. Expanded our resources and tools on racial and healthcare justice, including a video curriculum series, thanks to the generosity of a grant from the Live Oak UU Church Endowment Committee;
3. Created a Healthcare Justice Working Group to communicate with and support UUs engaged in state and national efforts toward single payer healthcare;

4. Organized the *Insist on Justice! Resist Inequality!* Conference in Evanston, Illinois, in April 2018, in collaboration with Unitarian Church of Evanston;
5. Facilitated Midwest speaking engagements and book club opportunities for author, activist and UU Chuck Collins to share his insights on inequality;
6. Engaged congregations and social justice committees in our Economic Justice Spotlight, which features best practices and diverse approaches to justice work from UUs nationwide. The *Economic Justice Leadership Award* was presented during GA 2018.
7. Sponsorship of the GA 2018 Poster Session: “Tools for Economic Justice;”
8. Sponsorship of the GA 2018 Networking Session: “Finding Coalition Partners, Raising Visibility and Money;”

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 consistent funding. We know that grants, especially from the UU Funding Program and the Live Oak Endowment Fund, make a huge difference in what UUJEC can achieve, so we will continue to pursue grants for our future work.

#### **Membership Committee Report: by Rev. Dr. Lucy Hitchcock and Kit Marlowe**

UUJEC currently has 158 active members and 1724 who subscribe to our newsletter and receive occasional action alerts, UUJEC news and program updates. Members and friends receive a quarterly e-newsletter and attend our webinars, conferences and workshops. Others attend our events at General Assembly, including our annual meeting. Financial contributions and volunteer work from members support the work of our board, staff and task force’s. Together, we can continue the education and action of UUs and others to correct the income and wealth imbalance in our country and world in these challenging times. We also welcome applications to join our “working” Board of Trustees.

In addition to routine recordkeeping within UUJEC for our board members, the Membership Committee developed certificates and procedures for recognizing efforts that advance economic justice, worked with the committee chairs to document our expectations of board members, and worked on a partnership survey with the committee that implements our justice grant from the Live Oak UU Congregation.

#### **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 e-mail to our 1700 subscribers and distributed to chapters, at conferences, and at GA. Board members Karla Chew and Sally Jane Gellert coordinate the communications.

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. New pages feature Healthcare Justice and Housing Justice resources.

### **Finance Committee/Treasurer's Report, by Treasurer Jane Bannor**

UUJEC reported \$34,760 in income for 2017, and we ended the year with a balance of \$25,801 after expenses of \$31,681. Our positive cash flow for the year was due in large part to a grant of \$14,850 from the UU Funding Program to help pay for a conference in Washington, D.C. to lobby for a stronger health care system and to generous support of \$8,475 from our individual and congregational members.

We continue to see positive benefits from engaging a part-time staff person. Our on-line web-site and communications, the newsletter, and our presence at General Assembly have all benefited from the support provided by office administrator Rachel Bennett Steury. While this budget outlay may be a bit of a stretch for us, it continues to prove a worthwhile expenditure of UUJEC funds.

The Finance Committee, composed of Jane Bannor, Carl McCargo and Karla Chew, has been meeting to develop both the group's annual budget and our financial guidelines and instructions. We have completed our 2017 tax filings with the IRS and the state of Massachusetts and continue to monitor federal requirements to assure we continue to qualify as a 501 C-3 non-profit organization.

Through May 2018, our financial picture continues to look positive. We have received a grant of \$6,600 from Live Oaks UU Endowment Fund to expand our work on the relationship between racial and health-care justice; our membership contributions are up to expectations; and the April conference focusing on income inequality and activism, held in Evanston, Illinois met its budget targets.

### **Webinar Committee Report: by Sally Jane Gellert**

Our newly-formed Webinar Committee, composed of Philip Hamilton, Maureen Maliszewski, and Sally Jane Gellert, are working on a schedule for the remainder of calendar year 2018. Proposed topics include food-worker justice, wage theft, financialization, racial justice and healthcare justice. We always welcome suggestions, both of topics and of speakers, from the wider UU (and non UU!) world.

### **Conference Committee Report, by UUJEC Jane Bannor**

A conference on responding to income inequality was held on April 21 at the Evanston Unitarian Church and co-sponsored by UUJEC and the Evanston church. The event, titled **"Insist on Justice! Resist Inequality,"** was attended by UU activists from three states and more than ten different congregations. Those who attended discussed how to use legislative and direct action to combat the income gap.



Chuck Collins, author of the book *Born on Third Base* and Senior Scholar at the Institute for Policy Studies, delivered the keynote address. Collins talked about ways current tax policy favors the wealthy and the middle class and how we can work to redress the balance to favor those most in need. Further tax and budget analysis was provided by Ralph Martire of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. He urged his listeners to support fair taxation and an end to excessive state borrowing,

The perspective of immigrants, racial minorities and the formerly incarcerated was provided by Fred Tsao of the

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Dr. Fannie Rushing of the SNCC History Project, and Alan Mills of the Uptown People's Law Center.

At lunchtime participants met at tables organized by subject matter so those interested in health care issues, electoral action or racial equity, etc. could meet with other activists concerned about the same topic. According to comments made after the event, attendees left the conference with plans to lobby their legislators, organize their congregations, and take part in more local justice-building activities.

### **General Assembly Program and Booth: by Sally Jane Gellert**

Once again, UUJEC is glad to have a presence at the General Assembly. We were stationed at Booth 319 in the Exhibit Hall and had two informal programs: A Networking Session “Finding Coalition Partners,

Raising Visibility and Money” with our partners UUSJ and Roots of Justice, and our Poster Session “Tools for Economic Justice.” Our Annual Meeting Featured Housing Justice Advocate Margaret J. May Former Executive Director of the Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council in Kansas City. We awarded the Unitarian Church of Evanston with the UUJEC 2018 Economic Justice Leadership Award for their work toward systemic change through mobilization and engagement.



## **UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

### **UUJEC Board of Trustees**

The Board has been involved, not only with policy, but with implementation of programs. There is no reasonable 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 our members and the Live Oak Church Endowment Fund. She keeps the Board supported and informed and plays an active role in fulfilling the mission of the UUJEC.

The Board and the Executive board each meet monthly, by phone, and via video-conferencing software. A two-day Strategic Planning Retreat was held directly before GA in Kansas City (2018). 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, IL	Jim Black, WI	Dr. Dick Burkhart, WA	Karla Chew, IL
Diane Conrad, OR	Rev. Judy Deutsch, NM	Rich Florentino, NY	Rev. Ralph Galen, MA
Sally Jane Gellert, NJ	Phil Hamilton, MA	Rev. Dr. Lucy Hitchcock, WA	Terry Lowman, IA
Maureen Maliszewski, CO	Kit Marlowe, NJ	Rev. John Martin, HI	Carl McCargo, MA
Sky Stewart, OH	Colin Sykes, TX	Dean Wanderer, 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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*~The Price of Democracy is Economic Justice for All~* [www.uujec.com](http://www.uujec.com)