

# **Bi-Annual Report, 2015-2016**

## **Unitarian Universalists for a Just Economic Community**

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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 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 the recent economic downturn and 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 a number of UU congregations across the country.

### **Accomplishments Since 2015**

1. Networked with congregations to assist them with promoting and providing educational materials related to economic inequality and its correction;
2. Organized Economic Justice Conferences in Evanston IL (Feb of 2015) and Boston, MA (May, 2015) and sponsored a conference in Ventura County, CA (Feb 2016);
3. Provided input to the UUA task force commissioned to create a study guide on Economic Inequality as well as creating our own curriculum and posting others from congregations;

*~The Price of World Peace is Economic Justice for All~ www.uujec.com*

4. Co-sponsorship of workshops at GA 2016 and in Districts and Regions on actions being taken to reduce economic inequality;
5. Further strengthened our partnership with YES! Magazine. Through a gift from our friends at *Yes!*, our memberships include a one year subscription.
6. Via social media and electronic outreach UUJEC distributed a survey to determine the economic justice priorities and needs of our members and friends for UUJEC program follow-up in future years.
7. Engaged congregations and social justice committees by developing an annual Economic Justice Leadership Award, presented during GA 2016.



*UUJEC  
Sponsored  
Escalating  
Inequality  
Conference:  
“Ventura  
Stories”  
February, 2016*

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 Panel and Faithify, make a huge difference in what UUJEC can achieve so we will continue to pursue grants for our future work.

### **Communications**

UUJEC publishes quarterly newsletter with articles on economic justice topics. Past issues have covered topics such as the need for universal health insurance, UUJEC’s involvement in the GA, media reform, union rights, 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.

UUJEC hired a consultant to help us update our website with easy-to-use resource materials and actions for their congregations and communities. It is now maintained by Rachel Bennett Steury and Karin Gates. It contains news, documents, and a means of becoming a member or making a donation to UUJEC.

## General Assembly: Program and Booth

UUJEC maintains two working groups to prepare for and execute our activities at General Assemblies. The GA and Conferences Committee is chaired by Michael Teasdale and the Booth



## UUA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Committee by Carl McCargo. The 2016 GA program will include 2 UUJEC sponsored workshops (in conjunction with other affiliates) **“Faith Communities Can Work Together to Reverse Climate Change”** and **“Connecting Across Faiths for Economic and Racial Justice.”**

UUJEC offers books on economic justice issues at our booth, as well as t-shirts, economic justice study packets and other materiel for GA attendees to take home to further their efforts.

## Finance Committee/Treasurer’s Report

In 2015, UUJEC expenses totaled \$33,445.87, and income stood at \$31,005.46. Of that amount, \$18,152 in expenses and \$16,729 in income were associated with Income Inequality conferences held in Chicago, Boston and Ventura, CA. A grant of \$8,500 from the UU Funding Program made it possible to provide scholarships and travel allowances, as well as top-notch speakers for these conferences.

In 2016 thru May, UUJEC has taken in \$4,705 and spent \$2,122. Our budget for the entire year totals \$16,575, which includes a \$9,200 grant from UUFPP to help pay for office staff, speakers and administrative costs to support the final year of programming related to the Escalating Inequality CSAI.

## UUJEC Board of Trustees

UUJEC is blessed with a genuinely working Board of Directors. 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. She keeps the Board supported and informed.

The Board meets bi-monthly and the Executive board meets monthly, by phone, and via video conferencing software. A two-day Strategic Planning Retreat was held directly after GA in Portland (June 2015) and directly before GA in Columbus (2016). The grand objective arising out of both retreats was to further build our resources and increase our membership and impact.

In Columbus in June 2016 the Board developed a plan for the organization to continue to take the struggle for economic justice forward. The highpoint of the plan is a spring 2017 Conference in Washington, DC where participants will learn about tax issues, exchange best practices and be able to meet with lawmakers to discuss progressive solutions. The board also proposed several task forces: one on taxation, one on corporate power and one for further work on the escalating inequality CSAI. Please go to our Web site if you are interested in joining us in Washington and /or working on a task force. The UUJEC board also committed to communicate more frequently with members and set up a web where it will be easier to communicate between congregations. Lastly the Board agreed to support the roll out of Chuck Collins new book, "Born on Third Base."

**Board Members serving 1-3 year terms are:**

Carol Allen	Princeton, NJ
Bob Alpern	Healdsburg, CA
Jane Bannor	Evanston, IL
Jim Black	Ephraim, WI
Dr. Dick Burkhart	Seattle, WA
Karla Chew	Oak Park, IL
Diane Conrad	Eugene, 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
Colin Sykes	Corpus Christi, TX
Michael Teasdale	Newbury Park, CA

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.

Our Advisory Board consists of members who give counsel in our activities and programs. They include: Rev. Dr. David Breeden, Dan Carter, Chuck Collins, Barbara Dudley, B.A., J.D., Rev. Dr. Richard S. Gilbert, David Korten, Ray Offenheiser, Mark Ritchie, Rev. Dr. Marilyn Sewell

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