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GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

Overview

Every day, 100 Americans are killed with guns and hundreds more are shot and injured. The effects of gun violence extend far beyond these casualties—gun violence shapes the lives of millions of Americans who witness it, know someone who was shot, or live in fear of the next shooting. 58 percent of American adults or someone they care for have experienced gun violence in their lifetime. Approximately three million American children witness gun violence every year.

Congregational Action

- Participate in the National Vigil to End Gun Violence in December by planning a service or special event to remember victims of gun violence.

- UUFH Congregational Affirmation about Gun Violence in alignment with the UUA

<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/affirming-congregational-commitment-gun-violence-prevention>

- Arrange for a *Be SMART* Presentation with FM Parents

The *Be SMART* program is designed to help parents and adults normalize conversations about gun safety and take responsible actions that can prevent child gun deaths and injuries.

- Once the Video System is approved and installed, arrange for a Movie Night screening of a film that focuses on the gun violence issue such as "*The Armor of Light*."

- During the next election, support and volunteer for Gun Sense Candidates running for state and federal offices.

Voting:

An immediate threshold issue – to elect representatives at the local, state and national level who espouse UU values. Take action to register voters, assist with obtaining ID's, provide transportation for the above and to the polls; campaign, circulate/sign petitions & letters; make calls; send donations, attend fundraisers.

Partners may include UUA - #UUtheVotein2020, UUJMNC/Forward Together and Democracy Action Team, You Can Vote, League of Women Voters, Progressive Alliance, and Poor People's Campaign.

- Join the local Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense-Hendersonville group and participate and support their events.

- Pledge financial resources to the state chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense which in turn supports local programs and advocacy; conduct a special offering in conjunction with a gun violence service.

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ZERO WASTE CAMPAIGN

Most people don't realize how much food they throw away every day- from uneaten leftovers to spoiled produce. About 94% of the food we throw away ends up in landfills. When Project Drawdown ranked the 80 most impactful climate change solutions, No. 3 was addressing waste of food. In the United States, we waste up to 40% of our food supply- enough nutritional value to feed millions. It accounts for an estimated 19% to 29% of global greenhouse-gas emissions. By managing food sustainability and reducing waste, we can help businesses and consumers save money, provide a bridge in our communities for those who do not have enough to eat, and conserve resources for future generations.

Benefits of reducing food waste

1. Saves money from buying less food

2. Reduce methane emissions from landfills and lowers your carbon footprint
3. Conserves energy and resources, preventing pollution involved in growing, manufacturing, transporting and selling food
4. Supports our community by providing donated untouched food that would have otherwise gone to waste to those that might not have a steady food supply.

Goals

1. Reduce Amount of food waste
2. Increase Amount of safe nutritious food donated to those in need
3. Recycle unavoidable food waste, diverting it from landfills

To achieve goals:

- Assessment - measure amount of food waste for members of congregation
- Education - ways to avoid and reduce food waste through articles in Beacon, Forums, incorporate in worship services
- Policy - advocate for reduction in food waste- at home, church, grocery stores, restaurants
- Voting:

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This congregation-encompassing effort would be fairly easy for our congregation to engage in and would not only help save our environment for future generations but would help feed the hungry.

Estimated Resources

- A. Financial: \$500
 - B. Space: meetings, presentations
 - C. Human:
 - a. Committee - design, promote, administer and assess the campaign as approved by the congregation
 - b. Board - ensure funding as approved by the congregation, become educated in the campaign
 - c. Minister - participate in activities as available, do one related sermon during the church year
 - d. Staff - develop methods for carrying out the campaign in key areas: Social Justice Outreach, Family Ministry, Music, Worship, membership, finance
 - e. Congregation - participate in campaign, promote beyond the congregation
- Possible participating organizations- Creation Care Alliance, Mountain True, Henderson County Recycling Center

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SAVING THE RAINFOREST - SAVING OURSELVES

Objective:

To promote advocacy and increase awareness of the vital role rainforests play in the climate crisis we face today.

Education:

Research organizations that are dedicated to saving the rainforest and it's rich biodiversity. Invite guest speakers from local universities, or organizations to speak about how we can mobilize to help save the rainforests and their biodiversity

Voting:

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Projects:

1. Organize study groups that focus on negative and positive effects related to rainforest preservation such as:
 - global impact of deforestation
 - negative and positive impacts to indigenous populations living in rainforests
 - loss of medicinal plants, including ones not yet discovered
 - loss of habitat for many of the world's animal and plant species
2. Research what sustainable products carry rainforest eco-certifications in restaurants, grocery stores and home improvement stores, and put up rainforest posters at UUFH downstairs with some of the information gathered.
3. Potluck at UUFH where dishes brought include ingredients that are forest friendly, such as sustainable coffee, bananas, chocolate, spices, and more that are Rainforest Alliance certified. Use only non-plastic cutlery, plates and eco friendly paper napkins.
4. Help develop family ministry projects, e.g., saving species! Get the kids involved!

Resources:

Financial: \$500

Space: meetings, presentations

Human:

- a. committees - design, promote, administer and assess the plan as approved by the congregation.
- b. family ministry - engage UUFH youth in learning about the richness and importance of the rainforest and its biodiversity.
- c. board - develop an expanded green certification policy that is rainforest compliant in all UUFH purchasing, from paper and wood products to foods. The policy would also encourage volunteers who contribute goods to UUFH social events to be aware of rainforest friendly guidelines. UUFH compliance with rainforest friendly guidelines should be noted on the website.
- d. Minister - participate in activities as available; preach one related sermon during the church year.
- e. Staff develop methods for carrying out the campaign in key areas: Social Justice Outreach, Family Ministry, Music, Worship, Membership, Finance.
- f. Congregation - participate in the campaign and promote beyond the congregation.

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CLIMATE JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

UUA has made CLIMATE JUSTICE one of their four intersectional priorities, calling this UU inter-organizational collaborative movement CREATE CLIMATE JUSTICE. UUA already has a website CreateClimateJustice.net, which lists resources, videos, and actionable congregational, local and global ways for each of us to make every kind of big and little effort. We see Climate Change as the existential crisis of our time. It is an umbrella issue that encompasses most other social justice issues. Individuals

and groups If UUFH chooses Climate Justice as our 2020 social justice focus, our members and friends can implement a multi-dimensional response, both locally and globally.

LOCAL GOALS (those within our fellowship, Hendersonville, and Western North Carolina) may or may not include:

- A. Partnership with area UU and other progressive congregations to provide and promote speakers, events, YouTube video and documentary discussions, etc. that result in combined efforts at addressing various aspects of Climate Justice.
- B. A frequently updated list of local climate change activist organizations, rallies, protests, etc. (examples: Creation Care Alliance, & Mountain True)
- C. Adult and youth projects developed with Family Ministry, focused on reducing our carbon footprint.
- D. Periodic sermons delivered by our own, or visiting ministers, activists, and others already doing meaningful work in this area.

GLOBAL GOALS (those with national or global effort and impact) may or may not include:

A. Voting efforts

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- B. Participating in, and occasionally hosting Postcard Parties to write to our country's key politicians about our climate crisis concerns.
- C. Attending regional and national UU conferences on climate justice.
- D. Start a book discussion group on Greta Thurnberg's No One Is Too Small To Make a Difference and/or Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming, by Paul Hawken

OBJECTIVE:

To create a wide variety of actionable items (ie: 101 Ways list) addressing Climate Justice, in ways that give everyone within UUFH and opportunity to do something, no matter how big or small, to have a positive impact on creating climate justice.

Means: All committees, teams, and groups would focus on a way or ways their particular focus can have an impact on climate justice.

ESTIMATED RESOURCES:

- A. Initial budget of \$500
- B. Space, meetings, presentations, advocacy and rallies
- C. Human:
 - a. SJOT - design, promote, administer and assess the campaign as approved by fellowship.
 - b. Board - ensure funding. Be updated periodically by designated SJOT member
 - c. Minister - participate in activities as available. Do occasional related sermons during church year. Suggest occasional appropriate sermon presenters, or approve/disapprove those suggested by climate campaign organizers
 - d. Staff - develop methods for carrying out the campaign in key areas: SJOT, Family Ministry, Music, Worship, Membership, Finance, Public Relations Promotion
 - e. Congregation - participate in campaign

AFFORDABLE HOUSING CAMPAIGN

OVERVIEW

As in many locales in Western North Carolina, there is a severe shortage of decent affordable housing in Henderson County. This affects people in all walks of life, young and old, renters and homeowners, who find themselves either 'cost burdened' in adequate housing or living in substandard housing – decrepit, unsafe, unhealthy, or overcrowded. The NC Housing Coalition estimates 28% or 13,500 households in Henderson county are so affected. [The issue of the homeless is a separate, although connected, issue.] Often these individuals and families find themselves moving frequently, and struggling to raise their families in safe, healthy surroundings without much hope for a better future.

The positive impact of a move to a safe, stable and healthy home has been well documented locally and nationally, especially as it affects childhood development and educational achievement. People in stable homes have better job opportunities, earn higher salaries and contribute more to the local economy.

While there are over 600 government subsidized housing units in Hendersonville, the local government response to this situation is minimal – perhaps it gets in the way of selling Henderson County as a business friendly, tourist and retirement destination? It should be obvious, though that improvement in our housing will positively benefit all of these goals.

The two major non-profits in the county are Habitat for Humanity and the Housing Assistance Corporation, both of which have their own business model and have been doing yeoman work in the community since the early 1990's.

CONGREGATIONAL ACTION

1. Obtain a more complete understanding of the affordable/substandard housing problem in Henderson county and the resources currently directed toward dealing with it.
2. Volunteer opportunities currently exist in the programs of both the HAC and HFH. These are suitable for a wide variety of skills and abilities, and would be gratefully received and put to work in the local communities. Work with Family Ministry and the sponsoring agency such as Habitat or HAC to identify and develop (a) activities for youth too young to be permitted in construction sites and (b) participation in construction by older youth within the agency restrictions for specific age groups.
3. **Voting:**
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Partners may include UUA - #UUtheVotein2020, UUJMNC/Forward Together and Democracy Action Team, You Can Vote, League of Women Voters, Progressive Alliance, and Poor People's Campaign.
4. Activities directed toward education of the public.
5. Direct financial support.

GOALS and ESTIMATED RESOURCES

Successful undertaking of the above action items.

Estimates of necessary/desirable resources – TO BE DETERMINED after further study.

NEIGHBORHOOD LISTENING PROJECT

Objective: The primary objective of a Neighborhood Listening Project is to engage the congregation in conversations with our neighbors within a 3-5 mile radius of our Fellowship for the purpose of discovering unmet or unidentified needs. This discovery method of reaching out to our neighbors and asking for their input takes “us” out of the driver’s seat and puts our neighbors in it. It’s a person-centered perspective based on asking questions about what’s really needed.

Means: The approach to a neighborhood listening project requires identifying multiple ways to reach out to neighbors. Some examples are: by phone, by mail, by invitation to come eat ice- cream, etc. Methods to encourage group think conversations on campus for robust feedback are many, including World Café settings.

Methodology:

First step: ask a lot of questions. Examples are: 1) What might we be doing to impact more young lives? 2) What does our community need that we know how to do? What do we know how to do? 3) How can we help others without intruding on their integrity? 4) What can we do to have positive long-lasting effect with no unintended consequences? Will the root cause be addressed? 5) How might we engage with our neighborhood within a 3-5 mile radius? 6) What assets/skills do we possess and want to share? 7) Whom might we involve? 8) Who in our neighborhood is falling through the social cracks? Why? 9) What proposal will inspire and excite the congregation to undertake a commitment that may need funding/fund-raising, skill sets, time, energy, and possibly stepping outside our congregational comfort zone? 10) What are our constraints/limiting factors? How can we frame those constraints to force a breakthrough and enable new thinking? 11) What do our children think needs work?

Add more questions, group answer them, refine the questions that are most important and group answer them again. This has the potential to engage the entire congregation including those who are no longer able to attend as well as our children and their parents.

Second Step: Self-Reflection - Design internal conversations to uncover how we want to embody our values and Principles in our engagements with the neighborhood. This is no small task, but a super exciting one. A Neighborhood Listening Project starts with good questions and requires excellent listening skills. As relationships are hatched, more opportunities will present themselves to live into our values and Principles.

Third Step: Group Think and Execute - Designing the ways to listen to our neighbors is a creative process. This would engage the congregation to the fullest extent possible. All hands on deck. Executing that design and evaluating the results will use skills we possess and skills we may need to learn or polish.

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Partners may include UUA - #UUtheVotein2020, UUJMNC/Forward Together and Democracy Action Team, You Can Vote, League of Women Voters, Progressive Alliance, and Poor People's Campaign.

Estimated Resources:

Finance: \$500 for canvassing materials, food, and staff time **Space:** Meetings in the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall **Human:**

Neighborhood - Within a 5 mile radius of our campus are significant resource groups. Covenant Presbyterian, Atkinson Elementary School, Episcopal Kanuga Conference Center, Champion Hills Golf Community, Hendersonville Country Club, Crooked Creek Golf Course. Within each of those entities are abundant resources, both informative and supportive.

Some additional friendly resources include Judy Long (The Free Clinics), Barbara Volk, mayor, John Murphy of Bullington Gardens (BOOST program), Tim Jones (Rescue Mission), Lisa Black (Fields of Gold Farm on Willow Road), and Ronnie Pepper (community story-teller.)

Committee - Design the conversations with input from the congregation; Lead the effort to carry out the conversations by members of the congregation, first by sampling for effect and success, and roll-out; Evaluate technique; Revamp technique and roll-out again.

Board - Approval for funding of staff hours, materials, mailing costs and food; Leadership to help shape and calendar conversation events.

Minister - Participate as leader to nail down why this is important work and how best to go about it; Give a worship service on 'Who IS my neighbor?'

Staff - Office help with mailings, website, calendaring

Family Ministries – consult with Junior High and High schoolers, parents, and FM Director Translation

Help – translation to Spanish and translator availability

Leaders – see Methodology

Congregation – see Methodology

Background: As Don has said, our Fellowship is located in a mixed socio-economic community of trailers, rental properties, condominiums, single family houses, and farms. Atkinson Elementary School is our neighbor. We deliver backpack food each week during the school year.

By engaging with our neighbors to identify need, we would be building a much larger community of souls caring for one another. Lots of face time with people we don't yet know. Meeting new people and working towards a common goal in itself is ground-breaking. Self-reflection work before we set out may be an unexpected treasure for our congregation. We don't have to go it alone. Just think of the resources that could be brought to bear were we to collaborate.

As with any neighborhood, the personal stories will bring issues to our attention and beg us not to look away. What are these stories? Let's find them and figure out a way to make a long- lasting difference in our neighbors' lives.

Inequality is a broad topic to tackle, but were it foundational to our social justice work, we could decide where to put the walls and what kind of roof is needed. Examples of inequality are

everywhere. Inequality can result in gun violence, climate injustice, food/health insecurity, voter suppression and gerrymandering, and even deforestation due to lack of alternative economic opportunity. Digging for root cause may lead us to a new place of understanding. Inequality is a universal injustice.

Summary:

What are the questions we need to ask? What/whose problems is our congregation meant to solve and why?

Each of the SJOT proposals was substantive and important. Any one of them would be important to pursue.

A Neighborhood Listening Project is a commitment to learn more about ourselves and our neighborhood. The benefits from this investment could widen our reach and bring us together to make a difference in the lives of people close to home.

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IMMIGRATION PROPOSAL

Objective:

- To build trust and establish mutually rewarding relationships with our Latinx neighbors of all ages.
- To provide support, alleviate hardship and address injustices affecting families and individuals in our local immigrant and migrant communities.

Means:

1. Draw on expertise of individuals within the congregation, larger UU community (Forward Together, UUA, Sally Beth Shore, etc) and our Hendersonville community for speakers and teachers to educate us in Sunday worship, congregational trainings and gatherings, and small groups including Family Ministries gatherings
 - to improve our cultural understanding and competence in relating with respect and kindness to our Latinx neighbors. (El Centro, TrueRidge)
 - to develop an awareness of the difficulties faced by those in our community living as residents with or without legal status, and often as a linguistic minority. (Pisgah Legal, Literacy Council, League of Women Voters)
 - to promote appreciation for the contributions of immigrants and migrants both to the essential labor force in the Hendersonville area, and to the diversity of perspectives in our community in entrepreneurship, learning, arts and ideas. (local advocate for Latinx farmworkers, Boys and Girls Club , Scouting, and Arts Council)
2. Join in efforts already undertaken by other churches (Immaculate Conception, St. James Episcopal, Grace Lutheran, Trinity Presbyterian, etc.) and organizations, *and bring forth* initiatives of our own where opportunity arises, to address crucial needs of immigrant and migrant neighbors facing challenges that range from discrimination and the threat of deportation to lack of basic resources (food, shelter, transportation, health and safety, educational opportunity).
 - Food and clothing drives
 - Transportation in emergencies, as needed in non-emergency situations, for regularly scheduled trips to health care, school, shopping, etc.

- Accompaniment to court and challenging appointments (TrueRidge)
3. Develop skills and knowledge for organizing and social action:
- to advocate for justice and fair treatment by government and other public and private entities at the local, state and national level through postcard parties; phone, email and personal contact with representatives/legislators, petitions; letters to the editor, etc. (Pisgah Legal, League of Women Voters, Immigration Network, Sheriff's Liason)
 - to encourage and empower with training and mentoring of members of the Latinx community, including adults and youth, to engage in self-organizing and self-advocacy. (El Centro, TrueRidge, Migrant Education Program)
 - to reach and register voters in all socio-economic, gender, racial and age demographics and in settings such as festivals and community gatherings, high schools, in the Latinx community including (with permission) outside grocery stores. (You Can Vote, League of Women Voters)
 - to raise awareness and educate the general public regarding opportunities to support and vote for compassionate and aware candidates, and for policies or initiatives (when on the ballot) which promote justice in dealings with immigrants and migrants in the area (sponsors of Silent Vigil at Courthouse, Immigration Network).

Voting: An immediate threshold issue – to elect representatives at the local, state and national level who espouse UU values. Take action to register voters, assist with obtaining ID's, provide transportation for the above and to the polls; campaign, circulate/sign petitions & letters; make calls; send donations, attend fundraisers. Partners may include UUA - #UUtheVotein2020, UUMNC/Forward Together and Democracy Action Team, You Can Vote, League of Women Voters, Progressive Alliance, and Poor People's Campaign.

4. Provide for personal experiences with Latinx culture and interactions between members of UUFH congregation (all ages) and those in Latinx community including adults, families and youth:
- Sponsor worship exchanges, mentoring, joint visits and field trips, cooking and landscaping classes, and joint community projects for adults, youth and families (home weatherizing, conservation projects, gleaning, etc.)
 - Include multicultural learning experiences for children beginning with preschoolers in Sunday morning gatherings through stories, music, cooking, games and art activities; through organized donation gathering (food and clothing, school supply drives); through field trips and inviting visitors to share their gifts from Latinx and other cultures. (Day of the Dead celebration)
 - Continue to invite Dreamers to speak at Sunday services yearly and include them at other times and settings when available; arrange meal shared by Dreamer's family and UU family—at home or in favorite restaurant following service.
 - Involve adults and young people in worship exchanges in which UU's visit churches with multicultural congregations and invite reciprocal visits.

Estimated Resources:

Financial: \$ 500.00 (with additional fund-raising to provide much needed support for El Centro, TrueRidge, etc.)

Space: reserve UU facilities for meetings, presentations and classes share space with partner churches and organizations support gatherings in public spaces as permitted

Human Resources: Congregational leadership and committees to explore, promote and coordinate teams focused on specific initiatives

Board, Minister, Staff, congregational participants to guide and carry out actions adopted and supported by congregational objectives.