

## MISSION STATEMENT

The First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego's Social Justice Executive Team (SJET) acts as a catalyst and resource to structure, lead, and support the congregation's social justice initiatives. It consists of a minimum of six members, at least four lay leaders elected in rotating two-year terms, and two staff: a Minister and the Social Justice Coordinator. SJET will help coordinate, support, and/or promote social justice events or initiatives of and within the congregation.

The SJET is specifically charged to:

- Help implement the strategic plan's social justice priorities, including Social Justice Action Team's aligned goals and initiatives.
- Develop, oversee, and implement the criteria and protocol for selecting Generosity Offering recipients, including creating and maintaining accountable relationships with recipients.
- Nimble respond to urgent social justice events and/or needs. This may take the shape of support for people in need, a public statement, letter to the congregation, signing onto a petition or statement on behalf of the SJET, or other response. The SJET is the first line of response.
- Administer the congregation's social media and web messaging regarding social justice. This includes the social justice Facebook group, blog posts, as well as coordinating social justice messaging with additional church social media groups and accounts, and maintaining the church's Social Justice webpage and highlighting social justice on the homepage as needed.
- Spark collaboration across Social Justice Action Teams and Journey Towards Wholeness (JTW\*) and highlight the work of the Action Teams and JTW. SJET will liaise with the Action Teams to help them with their goals.
- Evaluate social action endorsement proposals, including proposals to establish new Action Teams.
- Lead and/or support educational initiatives in the area of social justice, including for a congregational vote.
- Be aware of social justice resources in the San Diego area and help connect congregants to opportunities/organizations.
- Facilitate leadership development from within the congregation.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Question 1: So what, exactly, does the Social Justice Executive Team (SJET) actually do?**

- Answer: The SJET supports social justice activities at 1st UU. We do not directly oversee the work being done by members or action teams, but we are a liaison with the groups doing social justice work and study. For example, SJET coordinates social justice statements from our church (Question 3), coordinating the social justice newsletter

(Question 4), coordinating church social media related to social justice (Question 5), coordinating the Church's social justice budget (Question 6), and coordinating the development of relationship with community organizations via the generosity offering (Questions 7-8).

- **Question 2: How do I get in touch with the SJET?**

- Answer: The easiest way is via email to the official SJET email account [SJET@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:SJET@firstuusandiego.org). This account is checked regularly and we will respond to your email in a timely (though likely not immediate) manner. While giving a message to the ministerial team or action team leaders has the possibility of getting through to us, to ensure we see your message reaching out to us directly is the best course. Also, we're friendly! Come say hi on the patio or wherever you bump into us.

- **Question 3: I want the church to make a statement on a pressing issue facing our community. What can I do?**

- Answer: The SJET has been empowered to make statements on behalf of the First UU's Social Justice Executive Team (i.e., signed as 'The Social Justice Executive Team, First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego). However, to make a statement in the church's name (signed as 'First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Diego') a discernment process and a congregational vote is needed, which precludes issues that require immediate responses. However, if the church has completed a discernment process on an issue and a new incident comes up, additional statements can be made. For example, following the sanctuary discernment process and congregational approval, First UU (with input from SJET as needed), can make statements on immigration and asylum in line with the wording of the approved statement.

While the SJET does not oversee discernment processes, we are here to help support members who would like to lead such an effort.

What we have done: in 2021, SJET, working with LUUC (Larger UU Connections), compiled information on the 15 Statements of Conscience that have been ratified at General Assembly meetings over the past 20 years. These statements address social justice topics from citizen privacy to ethical eating and prison reform that have motivated UUs to take a stand and make Public Witness statements. In order for First UU of San Diego to leverage the research and discernment embodied in these Statements of Conscience, and make statements on behalf of our congregation, each statement would need to be approved by a two-thirds majority of First UU members. After polling our Social Justice community, we found that eight of the statements are especially timely and consistent with our congregation's beliefs. These statements will be ratified by vote during the Annual Meeting in June 2021. Having such ratified statements supports our ministers in making much more powerful statements - to local government, and to media organizations - with the backing of the entire congregation.

These detailed and well-supported Statements of Conscience also form the background for the Social Justice Executive Team to review Social Action Endorsement Requests from members (submitted via the website Social Justice Page) to determine whether there is congregational support for endorsement of other Social Actions.

- **Question 4: I would like to share an upcoming event with the wider church via the social justice newsletter. What do I do?**
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  - Answer: Send a message with the information to [SJET@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:SJET@firstuusandiego.org). Be sure to include a phone number so that we can contact you in case we have questions.
  
- **Question 5: What kind of social media does the church have regarding social justice?**
  - Answer: We have a First UU Social Justice Facebook Group. It is a closed group, but any First UU member or friend can request to join. [First UU San Diego Social Justice](#)
  
- **Question 6: What is the generosity offering? What do my donations toward the generosity offering achieve?**
  - Answer: Each Sunday's service includes an invitation for members to donate to a nonprofit organization working for social justice. Eighty-five percent (85%) of funds collected go to the recipient organization. Organizations chosen by SJET are BIPOC led and/or BIPOC serving, and interested in collaborating with us in a mutually beneficial, accountable relationship that may involve significant volunteer opportunities for our members. For example, our partnership with Project New Village, a food justice organization in Southeast San Diego, includes our members working in the PNV community garden and participating on a regular basis in planning meetings with leaders of PNV and its other partners
  
- **Question 7: I have an organization that I think would be a good fit for a relationship with First UU; how do I start the process?**
  - Answer: Forward your suggestion to [SJET@firstuusandiego.org](mailto:SJET@firstuusandiego.org) and we will respond. If it seems like it could be a good fit we will likely invite you to our meeting to discuss the organization and your relationship with them. The next step would be for you to fill out the Generosity Offering nomination form. After that we would reach out to the organization and discuss the possibility of forming a relationship with them. The SJET is still in the process of learning how best to form relationships with community organizations. We appreciate any and all feedback!