

SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY AND OUR SOCIETY
Results Based on 40 Completed Surveys

HIGHLIGHTS: The following eight (8) questions were asked to determine the **level of involvement that USH members and friends have in social justice issues.** Of the 40 people that answered the first question, 90% said it was important to be involved in social justice issues. Eighty one percent (81%) indicated that it was very important that USH be involved in social justice issues. Sixty-nine (69%) said that he or she and his/her family were involved in social justice work and about half of those were involved through USH. Answers to question #5 and # 6 indicate the wide variety of social justice issues and causes that USH members and friends are involved in – either through USH or outside of USH.

Conclusion: By a significant majority, USH members and friends think that it is very important or important that they personally *and* the congregation be involved in social justice issues. Involvement ranges from giving money to volunteering to tutor and serving on a committee or Board having to do with social justice issues. **Recommendation for COSJ and Board:** do more to communicate how USH is involved in the community and find ways to provide personal testimony of same.

1. How important is it to you to be involved in social justice issues? Very important 53%/ 21 Somewhat important 10 Important 5 Not very important 4 Not important at all _____
2. How important is it to you that USH be involved in social justice issues? Very important 30 (81%) Somewhat important 5 Important 2 Not very important _____ Not important at all _____
3. Are you and your family involved in any social justice work now? Yes 27 (69%) No 11 Sort of 1
4. If yes, are you involved through USH? Yes 14 No 16
5. If Yes, what do you do? Give money; tutor; odds and ends; youth group; My Sister's Place; soup kitchen; South Park Inn deliveries; global warming/IASC; home visits; peace, Green Sanctuary sub-council; NVC; Food Bank, Noah Webster tutoring; BTWWDA (3); racism; Board of Directors, Hartford Food System; Board of Directors, Covenant to Care for Children and Hartford Food System; officer in 2 non-profit organizations (treasurer + VP) – intend to get involved in a children's project; I volunteer at 10,000 Villages, a N.F.P. retailer that imports hand crafts from 3rd world countries supporting the artisans and promoting fair trade How many hours per month? Responses range from 0 to 40 per month _____
6. If you are involved in social justice work outside of USH, please tell us what you do, with what agency and how often (how many hours per week, month or year) No time; letter writing; \$ to Planned Parenthood, VNA, ALS Assoc.,YMCA; PFLAG; Stonewall Speakers; Community Renewal Team; anti-war demonstrations; Democratic Town Committee; local elections; Universal Healthcare; Veterans For Peace; ICEJ; Hands on Hartford; Commission on Indian Affairs; "do social justice work professionally and have compassion fatigue", other non-profit organizations + personal choices, decisions AARP; AFLCIO; HFT-R; Advocay for children with autism and support; Time spent ranges from 1-6 hrs per month _____
7. If you are not involved in any social justice work now, would you like to be? Yes 10 No 5
8. If Yes, how much time per week/month/year would you be interested in volunteering? Responses range from zero to 10 hours per month; ONE PERSON WROTE: "Have to improve personal circumstances to be open to more involvement"

HIGHLIGHTS: The next ten questions were asked to understand how USH members and friends would prioritize the issues that they felt USH should be involved in AND to understand what level of interest individual members and friends have in the various social justice issues. Respondents gave the highest priority, in question #10, to USH "providing or supporting social services for persons in need", the only issue with an average priority above "high priority". It was followed by "linking interested members to social service or advocacy programs". The third highest priority was to "calling attention" to issues "from the pulpit and in study groups". Lowest priority was to "Encouraging the Minister to use a portion of her time working with community and social action groups" preceded by "Giving money to ecumenical or non-denominational programs".

In answer to question #11,"Where should we focus our social justice ministry"? 54 out of 71 multiple responses indicated that USH should focus its attention in the City of Hartford, in the Hartford region or within a 5mile radius of the Meeting House. Only eight (8) indicated an interested in a national or global focus.

In question # 12, homelessness, racism, poverty and children's issues received the highest count of "very interested" responses; however, environmental concerns, children's issues, homelessness and poverty scored the highest when respondents were asked to rank their top three priorities. But only 14 out of 16 respondents said they would be willing to volunteer in one of their priority areas; however this could be due to the fact that they are already engaged in another social justice issue.

USH's monthly charitable giving collection (of which there are eight in a year) revealed that the top 5 organizations or issues that respondents supported were: My Sister's Place, Horace Bushnell Food Pantry, UUSC, GHICEJ and the Disabilities sub-council. True Colors received the lowest # of "yes" responses (11) but 17 respondents also answered that they "Don't Know" which may reflect that they don't know what True Colors is. The Lupeni Congregation and Hands on Hartford also received low scores in this question. No other organization was mentioned as one that USH should support with a monthly collection.

Conclusions and recommendation for COSJ and the Board: Members and Friends want USH to provide or support social services for people in need and link members and friends to social services or advocacy programs. They also support USH calling attention to SJ issues from the pulpit and/or in study groups. Interestingly, lowest priority was given to "encouraging the Minister to use a portion of her time working with community or social action groups." So it appears that they are accepting of some pulpit discussion of SJ issues but do not favor the Minister being encouraged to use her time to be more directly involved in SJ issues.

Generally, it would appear that USH members and friends want USH to stay local in their SJ focus.

9. Which one of the following statements best represents your impressions about the way our Society ministers in the community? 7 Very Involved 11 Involved 8 Somewhat Involved 13 Not Involved at All 2 No Opinion

10. In thinking about the many possible ways our congregation could be involved with community and social issues, what priority would you give to each of the following?

	Highest Priority (1)	High Priority (2)	Moderate Priority (3)	Low Priority (4)	No Priority (5)	AVERAGE PRIORITY (4-3-2-1-0)
a. Providing or supporting social services for persons in need	(15)	(15)	(5)	(3)	()	3.11
f. Linking interested lay members to social service or advocacy programs	(11)	(15)	(6)	(3)	()	2.97
d. Calling attention to social, community, and world issues from the pulpit and in study groups	(11)	(16)	(9)	(2)	()	2.95
b. Providing space in the Meetinghouse for community groups working on various issues and problems	(7)	(19)	(11)	(1)	()	2.84
j. Lobbying and petitioning corporate government officials on peace and justice issues	(3)	(24)	(7)	(1)	(2)	2.83

e. Organizing social issue advocacy or action groups	(7)	(17)	(12)	(2)	()	2.76
i. Helping organize or support disadvantaged groups to pursue their own causes	(4)	(18)	(11)	(3)	(2)	2.50
g. Giving money to denominational programs	(4)	(12)	(17)	(3)	(1)	2.41
h. Giving money to ecumenical or non-denominational programs	(6)	(8)	(19)	(4)	(1)	2.37
c. Encouraging the Minister to use a portion of her time working with community and social action groups	(2)	(10)	(19)	(1)	(1)	2.33

11. Where should we focus our social justice ministry?

- 3 In the immediate neighborhood of the Meetinghouse
- 18 Within a five-mile radius of the Meetinghouse
- 21 The City of Hartford
- 15 The Greater Hartford Region
- 6 Connecticut
- 5 The United States
- 3 Globally

ONE PERSON WROTE: “Within USH first”

12. Please indicate your interest in the following areas:	Very Interested (1)	Somewhat Interested (2)	Not Interested (3)	AVERAGE INTEREST (2-1-0)	TOP PRIORITY (3-2-1)
f. Homelessness	(24)	(9)	(2)	1.89	17
q. Racism	(23)	(10)	(1)	1.65	7
d. Poverty	(23)	(11)	(1)	1.63	16
m. Children’s issues (abuse, neglect, education, shared parenting, etc.)	(24)	(7)	(3)	1.62	18
h. Hunger	(21)	(9)	(2)	1.59	12
o. Illiteracy	(22)	(11)	(2)	1.57	2
k. Peace/disarmament	(20)	(13)	(1)	1.56	12
j. Environmental concerns	(21)	(12)	(2)	1.54	21
e. Unemployment	(19)	(8)	(3)	1.53	4
x. Gun control	(11)	(9)	(1)	1.48	1
g. Inadequate housing	(16)	(15)	(2)	1.42	4
c. Mental Illness	(14)	(15)	(2)	1.39	10
l. International issues	(11)	(16)	(1)	1.36	1
s. Homophobia	(13)	(19)	(1)	1.36	8
w. Gang violence	(12)	(15)	(2)	1.34	7
n. Education reform	(14)	(17)	(3)	1.32	8
p. Crime	(12)	(19)	(2)	1.30	5

Discrimination

r. Sexism	(8)	(18)	(1)	1.26	0
t. Ageism	(9)	(21)	(1)	1.26	0
v. Teen pregnancy	(9)	(16)	(3)	1.21	4
u. Disabilities	(11)	(21)	(4)	1.19	1
b. Domestic violence	(9)	(16)	(5)	1.13	2
i. AIDS	(6)	(18)	(3)	1.11	1
a. Substance abuse	(9)	(15)	(8)	1.03	7
y. Others (please list)	ONE VOTE FOR ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE				

13. From the above list, what are your top two or three priorities?

(1st) A (2); D(2); C; F (3); H(2); J (5) K(2); M (5); N; P; Q(2); S (2); W

(2nd) B; C (3); D (2); E (2); F (4); G(2); H(2); J(3); K (2); N; P; V(2); W(2)

(3rd) A; C; D (6); H (2); J(2); K (2); I; L; M (3); N (3); O(2); Q; S(2); U; X

14. Would you be willing to volunteer in any of these three priority areas? Yes 14 No 2 ONE Person wrote "maybe"; ONE Person wrote "Already do!" **TWO PEOPLE WROTE "Can't do more"; "Not now"**

15. In the current church year, eight of the offerings taken during Sunday worship services will be donated to a specific organization. For each organization, please indicate whether you would favor continuing that donation next year or not.

- 1. Interfaith Coalition for Equity and Justice 22 Yes 3 No 6 Don't know; **One person wrote "Give them 2 collections"**
- 2. True Colors 11 Yes 3 No 17 Don't know
- 3. My Sister's Place 30 Yes 1 No 1 Don't know
- 4. Horace Bushnell Food Pantry 29 Yes 2 No 1 Don't know
- 5. Hands on Hartford 12 Yes 4 No 12 Don't know
- 6. Unitarian Universalist Service Committee 28 Yes 2 No 3 Don't know
- 7. (Disabilities sub-council choice) 21 Yes 2 No 8 Don't Know
- 8. Lupeni partner church 12 Yes 8 No 9 Don't know
- 9. Other organizations? "I don't see us giving \$ to queers. If I want to, I will."

16. If you have children, are you interested in having volunteer opportunities for them?
Yes 8 No 4

17. Are you interested in having volunteer opportunities for your family to do together? Yes 6
No 4

18. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the social justice efforts at USH? "Survey is good idea."; "Please outreach to me"; "I am happy to give time and energy."; "It would energize the congregation to involve & educate them more in UUSC issues & involve in decisions on donations."; "We should do more."; "I should do more but not enough time"; "Suggestions: focus on 2 or 3 areas of interest or organizations & become experts. Funnel donations to those areas to meet multiple needs for a period of time. If spread too thin, efforts can be diluted."; "I want to be more involved but find myself on the other side of some issues meaning I have to better my personal life which is frustrating and too slow in coming"; "Should be from pulpit affirmed"