

Resolution of Conscience and Statement of Positions of the Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware

WHEREAS, the membership of the Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware [herein called UUSD] recognizes the importance of continuing involvement in social and environmental justice issues, the right of conscience, and the use of the democratic process; and

WHEREAS, as a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), UUSD affirms and promotes the following eight Principles, which we hold as strong values and moral guides:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part;
8. Added by UUSD in 2022: The liberation, transformation, and love that comes with dismantling racism and all oppressions in ourselves and in our society.

WHEREAS, UUSD has adopted as its Mission Statement: Nurture Spiritual Growth, Embrace Diversity, Work for Justice and Strive for a Loving World and supports the social justice agenda of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), the UU Service Committee (UUSC), and the UU Delaware Advocacy Network (UUDAN);

WHEREAS, UUSD recognizes the overlapping of social and environmental justice issues; actions in one area often result in changes in multiple areas;

WHEREAS, UUSD's members should support any social and environmental justice activities undertaken in the name of the church; and

WHEREAS, the Minister, the Board of Trustees and the Congregation desire to adopt a Resolution of Conscience and Statement of Positions regarding certain Social and Environmental Justice related issues;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that UUSD affirms its moral commitment to taking appropriate and positive action supporting the following areas as well as actions that affect more than one issue:

Racial Justice -- Every person has value as a member of the human family. The creation of fair and loving communities requires addressing the suffering caused by racism, oppression, and ethnic bias. We work to end racial and ethnic discrimination and injustice, starting within ourselves and moving into the world around us. We advocate for stopping racist and discriminatory policies and practices in housing; education; health care; access to voting; and criminal justice, policing, sentencing and drug laws.

In support of this commitment, UUSD will provide education for our members and the public on anti-racism; support repeal of the death penalty and other criminal justice reforms such as mandatory minimum sentences, coercive plea-bargaining practices, drug use criminalization, and cash bail that disproportionately impact people of color; support legislative efforts that expand access to voting; and improve law enforcement accountability. We will work to end environmental racism and discriminatory access to education and health care. We will work with local organizations and faith communities that share our commitment to anti-racism.

Immigrant and Refugee Justice -- People who leave their countries of origin do so for a variety of reasons. Refugees migrate out of necessity often in fear for their lives. Some immigrants migrate to create a better life for themselves and

their families; some are escaping political and social strife, gangs, and poverty, and some are climate refugees. Our nation is stronger because of people who have migrated here and their descendants. Their migration does not change their humanity or our obligation to work for recognition of their worth and dignity.

In support of this commitment, UUSD will help immigrants and refugees integrate into our area, and advocate for environmental refugees and for people fleeing oppressive regimes, violence, and economic deprivation.

Women, Children, Family, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Justice -- Decisions about children, families, gender identity, sexuality, and end of life are some of life's most profound. We promote safe and healthy family environments and just and compassionate laws for family planning and protection, reproductive health, sexual orientation equality, gender identity equality, and death with dignity.

In support of this commitment, UUSD will support equal rights for women, be a welcoming community to the LGBTQ+ community, provide same-sex marriage services, support a woman's right to choose, the right to death with dignity, and programs that assist victims of gender identity discrimination, domestic violence, and human trafficking.

Economic Justice – Upward mobility, the American Dream, has become more challenging and less accessible. Concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few has accelerated. Too many Americans are impoverished or struggling with debt, as the middle class shrinks due to technological advances; escalating costs for higher education, housing, and health care; and a tax structure that rewards the wealthy. People with poor mental and/or physical health, limited education, criminal records, or huge debts have diminished earning and buying power.

In support of this commitment, UUSD will provide education for our members and the public about escalating inequality; advocate for a living wage, affordable health care, housing, and higher education; and provide advocacy, support, and services to the low-income, youth at risk, and homeless in our community.

Environmental Justice – Climate change, along with ecological disruption and agricultural pollution, threatens the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food. Environmental Injustice is a human and civil rights issue, disproportionately impacting communities of color and low-income communities in the United States and around the world. It is a multiplier of many social injustices. The impacts of human-generated global heating are accelerating, bringing even more urgency to the issues for vulnerable local populations and the entire global community.

In support of this commitment, UUSD will work for the passage of and adherence to policies that seek reduction in harmful emissions, especially greenhouse gases, and that reduce or prevent environmentally harmful activities; promote clean energy and energy efficiency; work for equal access to clean air and water; and strengthen community resilience. UUSD will encourage our members to promote environmental awareness and live environmentally sustainable lives.

Peacemaking – Peace with justice takes many forms, from inner peace to international peace. Peacemaking includes addressing unjust war, religious and ethnic intolerance, the gun culture and working to eliminate gun violence, and domestic violence. Peacemaking requires a cultural shift to embracing diplomacy, nonviolent conflict resolution, and restorative justice. We honor those who serve in the military working to maintain the peace as well as those who conscientiously object to military service. Creating a culture of peace requires work at many levels – individual, relational, community, state, national, and international.

In support of this commitment, UUSD will advocate for sensible gun laws and reallocation of government funding from weapons to diplomacy and de-escalation interventions, pursue peace, and be a significant presence during Peace Week Delaware.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that UUSD hereby authorizes the Minister, President of the Board of Trustees, and Chair or designee of the Social & Environmental Justice Committee to advocate these positions speaking for UUSD from the pulpit and at public or other appropriate forums that provide an opportunity to promote said positions.

Proposed June 2024