



FIRST PARISH CHURCH OF STOW AND ACTON

PLATE SHARING POLICY

Approved by the Board of Trustees 01.12.2014

The Social Justice Council (SJC) will review the suggestions for a charity as presented by an FPC sponsor who is actively involved with the charity. The sponsor must be willing to provide educational and promotional support material. The SJC will recommend a list of charities for Board approval. For more information on the SJC selection criteria and process, see the ‘SJC Guidelines.’

Guidelines for Initiating and Assessing Social Justice Activities: September 2013

About five years ago the Social Action Committee proposed that individual members of the congregation who approached any of us with interests in initiating specific Social Justice activities create for themselves a Social Action “Task Group.” There were two good reasons for this. First of all, we wanted to spare individuals because we had learned, the hard way, that too often one individual with a great idea – or, if s/he’s lucky, with the help of two noble members of the committee – end up doing everything that can be involved in implementing a successful project. Secondly, the Task Group model makes it more likely that a worthy effort will be able to sustain itself for a longer time and engage more people in ‘good work.’

We designed some Task Group Guidelines to help us evaluate the feasibility of proposals and, with or without the formality of a “Task Group,” I’ve found the guidelines helpful in thinking practically about what helps to make successful Social Action/Justice initiatives – and in assessing the appropriateness of plate-sharing nominations. (see separate memo)

- 1) The proposed initiative needs a Name and some kind of stated purpose or mission.
- 2) Initiator needs to explain how this project relates to priority criteria established by the Committee. Initiatives should:
 - a) Increase awareness of social justice issues within the church community and beyond;
 - b) Grow the Church's denominational connections;
 - c) Act locally but seek far-reaching effects;
 - d) Involve some kind of hands-on, direct service;
 - e) Involve youth; increase their awareness of social justice issues.
- 2) Initiator must describe, explain some specific activities involved in what’s proposed.
- 3) Initiator needs to specify what, if any, amount of financial support is requested from the Social Action Committee and indicate for what purpose are funds needed. (During the past year, the Council had a budget of \$500 for its activities. At the end of 2012 it was decided that annual denominational dues to denominational organizations – UUA, UU Mass Action, and UU Urban Ministry – would come from the main church budget.

UUSC has been given a plate-sharing month.)

- 4) Initiator must also specify what kind of non-financial support is needed. The Social Justice Council is premised on an assumption that members are “consultants” who can advise people about procedures that can help to insure the success of initiatives (see separate memo about recommended steps to take in planning social justice events and educational activities for the congregation and local communities).
- 5) Initiator needs to find four or five members of FPC who agree to work on this project.
- 6) Initiator should explain how s/he will involve (and keep informed) other members of the congregation about your project?
- 7) Initiator will specify how long the initiative will last (a time line)? After three years, the activity is expected to become self-sustaining or to be incorporated into a regular feature of church life – as has happened, for example, with Fair Trade, and the Holiday Gift Drives).
- 8) Initiator should identify how the initiative can engage collaboratively with other church or community organizations.
- 9) For the endorsement of the Committee (or now, the Council), the Initiator must agree to serve as Leader of the effort and report to the Social Action Committee.

from Rick Lent 12.10.2013

PLATE SHARING PROCEDURES

During the months of September through May, FPC will share the collection plate income with a charity. There will be an announcement from the pulpit and/or in the Sunday ‘Order of Service.’ *Each week, one half of the non-pledge offering of cash and checks received in the plate is given to a worthy local, national, or international charity. If you are writing a check, it would be helpful if you write in the memo line how you wish your gift to be applied (pledge, split, church only).*

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The Treasury Team (TT) will deposit into a special account income from the previous Sunday Collection Plate sources: ½ of the cash and ½ of the undesignated non-pledge checks, split checks, plus checks or cash specifically designated for the charity. Additional checks from donors may also be deposited. At month’s end the Treasurer will give the minister a check which he will send with a cover letter to the charity.

The Treasury Team will contact the donors of larger non-pledge amounts to determine the donor’s intention if there is no indication in the check memo line.

Drafted by Nancy Friedrichs and Helen Jones