

# Summary of Social Justice Committee to date (2/26/18)

**Purpose of this Document:** Status Report for Council.

**Activities to Date:** Social Justice Steering Committee met during July and August 2017, with subsequent email discussions. BOMO were updated at several of their meetings since August 2017. Jan 31, 2018: Spire announcement of Committee. Feb 4, 2018: church worship service announcement.

Steering Committee participants: Jim Barnes, Susan Warner, Cathy Imboden, Steve Whelan, Tom Warren. Also participating: Martin Reikert. The following concepts are based upon the discussions of these participants.

**Structure of Social Justice Committee (Committee):** Under the purview of BOMO (based on CCOT bylaws and Social Justice Committee mission). Committee should communicate with BOMO and the Council and keep them informed, but do not need approval for activities. Consistent communication by the Social Justice Committee should prevent the Council from being surprised about the activities of the Committee. An important relationship is that between the Committee and the CCOT Speakers bureau, which solicits and engages educational speakers for the church: A close relationship is envisioned in order to fulfill the educational component to the work of the Committee that is anticipated. At least one member of BOMO should also be a member of the Social Justice Committee. Tom Warren volunteered to be chair. Four additional people have expressed an interest in being formal members.

**Mission Statement:** *Address the root causes of social or environmental inequities through education and advocacy in a respectful and peaceful manner.*

**Scope:** The scope of Committee work would be flexible, based on the interests and passions of CCOT members; Current thoughts: Homelessness, Immigration, Climate Change, Gun Safety, Wealth Inequality, Opioid Crisis, and Mental Health.

**Goals/Generic Activities:** Study issues, network and facilitate involvement, educate, advocate change and serve as a catalyst for change, organize for action, take action. Considerations Regarding Generic Activities: Some work would be only CCOT members, other work would interface with non-CCOT organizations, such as HUGS, or Committee may serve as a link, to or facilitate activities with non-CCOT people.

**Guiding Principles:** Non violent, Create a safe space for dialogue, Prayerful, Faith-guided action.

**Statement Concerning the Potential Controversiality of Committee activities due to a Diversity of Perspectives in our Community:**

"We are aware that some church members will not be in full agreement with certain positions or actions taken by other church members in the context of the Mission, but will proceed with respect for those who disagree".

**Relevant Policies and Statements:**

- 1) CCOT Bylaws (Social Justice is under the purview of BOMO)
- 2) Title 26 (Internal Revenue Code) 501(c)(3)
- 3) UCC Policy Statements:

*The Johnson Amendment, signed into law in 1954, prohibits tax-exempt organizations from endorsing or opposing political candidates or political parties. But tax-exempt groups, including churches, are not restricted from policy issue advocacy, such as supporting immigration reform or opposing the death penalty.*

*Sorensen believes that the distinction between "the political and the partisan" is an important one. "As people of faith, we are called to live out and witness to our faith in the public sphere," she said. "When we act to order our common life with justice, equality, care and compassion, we inevitably engage in political life. This is very different from engaging in partisan politics. Supporting or opposing a particular candidate, political party or ideology robs us of our prophetic power as people of faith."*

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Jim Barnes, BOMO member