

UUJEC Economic Justice Spotlight

First Parish of Sudbury. Sudbury, Massachusetts

Living Our Faith at First Parish

Living Our Faith is our overall umbrella for our congregation's social justice activities. Our minister, director of religious education, past president, treasurer, assistant treasurer, and administrator all participate actively.

We fly a Black Lives Matter banner and post Black Lives Matter signs on our property, we hosted a community forum on why we have done so (panelists included our minister, a person who talked about White privilege, our police chief, a Black 50-year resident of Sudbury, and me), and we intend to take follow-up actions in the Fall. Our minister and our assistant treasurer had items in our local paper about why we support BLM, and I had a column on BLM published there.



Photo from First Parish Facebook page.

We collect backpacks for homeless children in the Fall, have a Secret Santa collection for disadvantaged children at Christmas time, and make quilts that we donate to hospice patients and victims of domestic violence. Our quilters raised more than \$1600 for the Free Metrowest Clinic by making and raffling a very special quilt.

We have supported a Haitian-American family since the eldest child was about to graduate from Middle School. The three eldest children in this family have graduated from college —one is working towards becoming a physician, another is working towards becoming a nurse — and the two youngest (twins) are now college freshmen.



*First Parish members and members of the Haitian-American Family they support.
Photo provided by First Parish.*

For about the last nine years we have mentored a lifer — visiting him monthly, and communicating with him during the intervening weeks. He is now in the Boston University College Behind Bars Program, and has completed two English, one American History and one Sociology course with grades of A, A- B+and B. We collect and deliver food for the Sudbury Food Pantry weekly, and serve at a Maynard food pantry at least monthly.

This church year we made a full plate donation to Syrian refugees, as we do to the Metrowest Free Medical Clinic each Christmas Eve. We have monthly share-the-plates for organizations such as UUMassAction, Employment Options, Domestic Violence Roundtable, Dignity in Asylum, Coalition for the Homeless, three local food pantries, and Human Rights Watch. We held letter writing sessions to legislators for single-payer health bills, the We the People Act, LGBTQ public accommodations, improvements in the criminal justice system, and to foreign officials for Amnesty International's annual Write for Rights.



We showed "Out at Work" as one of our monthly film screenings, and donated to PFLAG, GLAD, OUT and the UUSC. We are members of UU Mass Action and UUJEC.

We Walk for Hunger and Walk for Family Promise. We buy Fair Trade coffee for use in our church, and we used to sell it and fair trade chocolate. Our sustainable food group meets monthly, and individual members belong to Community Support Agriculture Program. One of us is a commissioner on the Sudbury Housing Authority that provides affordable housing. Another is a member of Sudbury's Board of Selectmen, where she advocates for affordable housing.



First Parish Peace and Justice Vigil, Photo provided by First Parish.

Although it may seem that our church gives charity more than it works for justice, we do bring about more justice by the help we give people.

Article developed in collaboration between UUJEC Administrator Rachel Bennett Steury and Rev. Judy Deutsch of First Parish. To reach First Parish, please contact Judy at revjd@aol.com.

Additional Resources:

First Parish webpage: <http://fpsudbury.org/>

First Parish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/First-Parish-of-Sudbury-104705979571381/>

MetroWest Free Clinic: <http://metrowestfreemedicalprogram.org/>