

Human Rights Committee of the Social Justice Group had it's first meeting April 25, 2013.

In attendance were Mike Kreyche, Lee Brooker, Mary Maske, Saunis Parsons and Susan Poole, chairperson.

There are four areas of focus that are included under the umbrella of the Human Rights Committee which include concerns that fall under the topics of Immigration, Women's Rights, Racial Concerns and LGBTQ Issues.

The committee agreed to pursue actions in all of the areas. In regards to Women's Rights issues the group Freedom Ohio was discussed. Members expressed interest in circulating petitions to support the movement to repeal the ban on same-sex marriage in Ohio and to support the Freedom to Marry Act. Susan agreed to procure petitions and distribute them to interested parties for signing. Please let me know if you were not at the meeting and would like a petition. I was not able to obtain and download more than one from the website so the Freedom Ohio office will be mailing me several. I hope to have them at church this Sunday to distribute.

The committee also recognized that the General Assembly has adopted Reproductive Rights as a topic of focus for the year so the group has agreed to keep this in our awareness as we move ahead and plan events.

In addressing LGBTQ issues, Saunis recognized that there is a second part to the LGBT Welcoming program that the church previously participated in. The committee felt this may be something to pursue in the future as a continued training and awareness.

Racism was a topic that a fair amount of time was spent discussing. Lee Brooker had led a discussion group in the Fall using the book *The New Jim Crow*. We discussed possibly having a teach-in or panel discussion in the fall with representatives such as a Leap (Law Enforcement Against Prohibition) Officer and someone representing the Sentencing Project (addressing outrageous mandatory minimum sentencing/ the high rate of minorities incarcerated). The committee was considering September as a possible month for an activity in this area.

Saunis will touch base with her contacts at LEAP for a possible speaker and Lee will pursue a speaker through the Sentencing Project.

Susan will follow up to obtain a date for the Immigration activity through the church office.

The Fairlawn UU Church may be a contact to join forces with in this project.

Possible movies that were discussed to obtain/show were *The House I Live In* (PBS independent documentary) and *The Central Park Five* (PBS).

Lee Brooker and Saunis Parsons have agreed to type up a summary of their experiences and resources in these two areas so the group can consider this information in deciding what to pursue.

Mike Kreyche presented a brochure and information regarding a group call Samaritans/Los Samaritanos. He has been involved with this group in Arizona and plans to travel there for the June through September period. He offered to write monthly articles for the newsletter to inform and raise awareness about the work he and this group will be undertaking to support immigration issues and humanizing the border policy/work. This group delivers food and water to different points along the immigrant trail.

The committee has agreed this is an area we would like to tie in with a Sunday service in the future (possibly November?) as well as request a special collection for. If a Sunday service is not available, another possibility would be showing the documentary about the life of Maria Inajosa to educate and raise awareness.

Another opportunity we discussed was connecting with the Immigrant Workers Project in the Canton area. Saunis stated she has information from a meeting she and Melissa attended that she is willing to type up and share with the committee via email.