

Social Justice Program Annual Report 2007-08

Kate Lore, Minister of Social Justice

This was a significant year in the Social Justice Program for several reasons:

- We launched the Peace & Justice Collaborative, now located in the lower level of the Buchan Building. The collaborative includes: **Amnesty International – Portland Chapter , Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF), Recruiter Watch, Portland Global AIDS Coalition and Veterans for Peace—Chapter 72**. We spent this fall and winter getting the office up and running, organizing a calendar of events and exploring ways in which we can all work together. Each of these groups now meets regularly at our church, usually in the lower level of the new building. An example of the new kind of collaboration that these group members are facilitating took place in the February Music & Worship Service. As you may recall, the program was on Habeas Corpus and including stories of people detained at Guantanamo Bay. Two of our members have been giving legal counsel to inmates and they gave very moving testimonies about what we must retain Habeas Corpus for all citizens. At the end of the service, our Amnesty International group was present with a rich array of resources and avenues for advocacy. It was a powerful and effective service that prompted over 200 church-goers to take actions sponsored by Amnesty International.
- We launched **3 new Recovery Groups**, 2 of which deal with Addictions (using classic AA format) and 1 of which provides support (using classic AI-Anon format) for those with addicted loved ones. Each of these groups meets in the lower level of our Buchan Building once a week.
- Each of the past 10 years has seen a lot of growth in the Social Justice Program. This is the year has been no different in that regard. We have 9 action groups, 2 affiliated groups (UUSC and UUJEC), and 3 Recovery groups. There are now in which **we have pushed reached the limit of what our infrastructure can support**. Thus, until we can fortify our infrastructure with more staff, we will need to be more selective, to set priorities and to say “no” more often to outside groups.
- Now that I have been called as an Associate Minister, **the leadership of the Social Justice Council is now taking more responsibility for the program**. We now have an Executive Team that meets monthly comprised of the chair, vice chair, and secretary of the Social Justice Council, plus myself and my assistant, Rev. Katherine Jesch. I have also placed an emphasis on providing these leaders with the development opportunities and training that they desire.