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March 2025



Interfaith Advocacy Day, Tuesday, April 29

There is power in knowledge and strength in numbers. Join us for Oregon Interfaith Advocacy Day, sponsored by Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Tuesday, April 29, at St. Mark Lutheran Church in Salem. Attend issue briefs and workshops on advocating for compassionate legislation, followed by meetings with state legislators.

Location: 790 Marion St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

Email: emo@emoregon.org

Phone: (503) 588-0141

OUUVfJ will meet for this lobby day. We hope you will join us. You can register at the Ecumenical Ministries website: [Interfaith Advocacy Day • Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon](#) (scroll down to find the form). Scholarships are available also. It will be a great time to meet with our legislators.

[Register Here](#)

UU Congregations Support Neighbors Experiencing Housing Insecurity



Conestoga Huts Project at UU Church of Eugene

At the March meeting of the OUUVfJ liaisons, Barb Prentice described the Conestoga Hut project at the UU Church of Eugene. The project is part of a St. Vincent de Paul Car Camping program. Thirteen years ago, [Community Supported Shelters](#) donated materials valued at \$5-6,000 for two huts made from wood and insulated vinyl.

Church members and community volunteers assembled the 6-foot by 10-foot houses and dug trenches for electrical wiring for the Conestoga huts, which are located on the lawn next to the church parking lot. Later, two more huts were built in the same way.

Two of the Conestoga huts are now being replaced with tiny houses, which are larger and have better flooring than the huts. An individual donated the tiny houses and members of the church painted and refurbished them. Residents report that portable heaters keep them comfortable. They also have access to porta-potties and to the church's laundry facilities. Residents are always invited to church potlucks. The only expense for the church has been paying for the utilities.



St. Vincent de Paul manages the program for the most part, including upkeep for the porta-potties. Community Supported Shelters handles other maintenance, financed by St. Vincent de Paul.

Residents are approved for the program by church members based on background checks and drug testing conducted by St. Vincent de Paul. Every month, each resident meets with someone from the church's Conestoga committee. In addition, residents are responsible for obtaining residence permits each month. So far, five have found housing with the help of local agencies. Recently each resident has been connected with a social worker, and now residents have a goal of becoming housed within 2 years.



**More Exciting Events
at the UU Church in
Eugene!**

UUs made national news when they attended the protest against proposed VA cuts at the Eugene VA facility. On March 11, the protest was covered on MSNBC's Rachel Maddow show!

Climate Revival

On March 1, UUCE held a Climate Revival, attended by more than 50 people envisioning the future they wanted for 2050. They identified both challenges and opportunities. As a follow-up to this event, UUCE held a climate-themed service on March 2.

Refugee Sanctuary Group

The UUCE Refugee Sanctuary Group has promoted and attended training offered by nonprofit partners on knowing one's rights, being a legal observer, etc. The group has made and distributed red cards; collected used binders to donate to Escudo Latino, a Springfield group that makes emergency binders for immigrants; informed church members about important bills; worked with church staff on protocol for keeping visitors safe during food distribution events; and become a partner with Oregon for All, a coalition of Oregon groups working to help immigrants in our state."

UUFCO Launches New Social Justice Initiative

UUFCO (Bend) just launched a new Social Justice Initiative: Care for the Incarcerated. Its mission is "to improve the conditions of Adults in Custody (AIC) in the Deschutes County carceral system, both during their time served and following release."

Our ultimate goal is to reduce recidivism and promote a positive reintroduction of these adults into our communities.

We are beginning by engaging in a process of self education by gathering information about the current state of the system. We are listening to speakers such as the County Commission, the Captain who operates the jail, and judges who view the system from different perspectives. Our strategy includes:

- Promoting more humane and rehabilitative treatment for adults in our jails.
- Providing services after the period of incarceration is completed, such as supplying names of employers in Bend who are willing to employ this population, and identifying housing options, which are severely limited upon an inmate's release.

We are actively seeking out other organizations in Central Oregon who are providing similar services or who have similar goals so our impact will be greater than just acting alone. If other UU congregations in Oregon have similar programs and would like to share information, please contact our team at: Care4incarcerated@uufco.org

Board President's Musings

President Sue Craig

It is heartening to see so many people reaching out for connection at this time. This is how we will make it work. We in OUUVfJ will indeed continue to work toward legislation that encompasses our UU values.

We have four new board members who took a deep breath and decided that this was an organization that possibly could be a home for their ideas and their efforts. They are extraordinary!

At this time, we are also doing a lot of work to increase our ability to reach you by newsletter, through our wonderful liaisons, and via our website, which will soon be up and running again.

As you can see, this issue of the newsletter came to you by MailChimp. The board switched from our previous system, as this one will be easier to pass on as our leadership changes over time. We are reaching well over 500 of you! It will cost \$45 a month to do that, and if you want to help, just a little, it can mean a great deal. Yes, another request for money. As with you, that is often all I get in the mail!

Truly, we love YOUR input, mainly through our liaisons. So, learn who your liaison is, and give that person lots of ideas on how we can work with you. Do you have an article that you would love us to share? Do you, or your youth, have a great idea for a webinar we can do with you? We want to hear about your ideas for justice action.

Have you learned how to use the Oregon Legislative Information System (OLIS)? If not, see Jean Pierce's video (link at the end of this newsletter).

And then, do send us a tiny bit (no we won't pass up a bigger gift) of moolah! But mainly, keep on doing what many of you are involved in, making good trouble!

Thanks for that.

-Sue Craig

About Oregon UU Voices for Justice

Oregon UU Voices for Justice Mission

Oregon UU Voices for Justice is a statewide liberal religious advocacy network that seeks to educate, organize, and mobilize UUs and their congregations to advocate for policies designed to build an Oregon that:

- Affirms the worth and dignity of every person.

- Promotes justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.
- Supports religious freedom.
- Upholds the right of conscience and the democratic process.
- Recognizes the interdependent web of all existence.

Members of the Board

- Sue Craig, President, UU Church in Eugene
- David Delk, Treasurer, First Unitarian Church and Wy'East UU Fellowship, Portland
- Kathleen McKinney, Secretary, UU Fellowship of McMinnville
- Max Merrill, UU Fellowship of Central Oregon, Bend
- Jean Pierce, First Unitarian Church, Portland
- John Raymond, Florence UU Fellowship
- Lisa Lake, UU Community Church of Washington County
- Jim Henry, Florence UU Fellowship
- John Prohovsky, UU Congregation of Salem

Current Board Activities

1. Rebuilding personal congregational relationships, post-pandemic.
2. Exploring ways to help congregations in their justice work.
3. Planning webinars to showcase speakers who would have addressed the annual meeting.
4. Developing better ways to communicate with members.

2025 Oregon Legislative Information

Check the OLIS website for information on the 2025 Oregon legislative session and committees: [Oregon Legislative Information System](#)

How to Use the Oregon Legislative Information System(OLIS)

<https://youtu.be/vNstQjP9U-I>

This video about how to use OLIS was prepared for us by Jean Pierce, member of the OUUVfJ board and of First Unitarian Church, Portland.



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