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Peacemaking Congregational Study Action Issue Update

The Peacemaking Congregational Study Action Issue (CSAI) Core Team announced that the Spring 2007 Peacemaking CSAI program materials are now available from the Commission of Social Witness (CSW) website (www.uua.org/csw).

Three sets of materials have been developed for congregational use: 1) a script and materials for an introductory workshop on the topic of peacemaking that can be organized by volunteers in local congregations, 2) a set of session plans that can be used for discussion in small groups, and 3) a Resource Guide which lists books, articles, films, websites and other resources that can be used by groups or individuals to explore peacemaking issues.

The small group session plans can be used either in existing small group ministry (covenant) groups or in new groups created to be part of the denomination's exploration of peacemaking. The sessions cover five aspects of peacemaking: a) an introduction to concepts and definitions, b) interpersonal and congregational peacemaking, c) building a culture of peace, d) structural violence, and e) international peacemaking.

The Core Team encourages UU congregations to use their great creativity in adapting these materials to better fit their needs, or in developing entirely new programs on peacemaking! The Team requests feedback from all participating churches on what seemed to work well and what did not. This will provide extremely helpful information for preparing next year's program materials which will be available in September 2007.

Individuals interested in helping with the Peacemaking CSAI process are encouraged to sign up for one of the national working groups (see the CSW website), or to take leadership within their congregations in implementing peacemaking study programs.

Attached is an overview of the CSAI materials and the Core Team's current plans for the four-year cycle.

Peacemaking Congregational Study Action Issue Spring 2007 Study Program Overview

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Peacemaking Congregational Study Action Issue (CSAI) program!

The Peacemaking CSAI was adopted at the June 2006 General Assembly for a four-year cycle of study and action, as part of the reworking of our UU social witness process to involve congregations more meaningfully and deeply.

A Core Team has been created to assist in guiding implementation of the Peacemaking CSAI, made up of volunteers and representatives of the UU United Nations Office and UU Service Committee. It reports to the Commission on Social Witness which has formal responsibility for the Peacemaking CSAI process.

This spring the Core Team hopes that many UU congregations will participate in this first phase of the Peacemaking CSAI program, using the introductory materials designed to raise awareness of the dimensions of peacemaking and violence and begin to involve people in a deeper exploration that will continue through the CSAI cycle.

We would appreciate feedback and suggestions for improving these materials and developing others over the spring and summer 2007. Based on feedback, additional materials will be developed and made available next fall. We also encourage individuals and congregations to use their creative energies in developing their own peacemaking study and action programs, and to let us know how they are going. Input can be posted through the Peacemaking Network Mailing List (subscribe at <http://lists.uua.org/>) or sent directly to John Hooper (jhooper@optonline.net) or Judy Morgan (judymorgan711@yahoo.com) of the Core Team.

Pilot Study Program Materials

The following are available at www.uua.org/csw for congregational use:

Introductory Workshop – This script is designed for use by volunteer facilitators in local congregations, providing a 60-90 minute exploration of the topics of peacemaking and violence, and an introduction to the Peacemaking CSAI. The workshop is entitled “The Meaning of Peacemaking in Our Lives: An Introduction to the UU Peacemaking Study Action Program.”

Small Group Session Plans – These provide discussion questions and a suggested format for use in either ongoing small group ministry (covenant) group programs or individually arranged small group discussions (lasting 60-90 minutes). It is recommended that they be used in the following sequence, but groups may want to pick and choose to fit their preferences:

- 1 - *Peacemaking Concepts and Definitions: An Introduction*
- 2 - *Interpersonal Peacemaking* – Groups can select one or more of the following:
 - a) *Interpersonal Peace*

- b) *The Peace of Forgiveness*
- c) *Congregational Peace*
- 3 – *Building a Culture of Peace*
- 4 – *The Many Faces of Violence* (Structural Violence)
- 5 - *International Peacemaking* (This will be available in later Feb. 2007)

Resource Guide – This provides a list of books, articles, films, websites, and other resources that could be used by a study group, in addition to noting several formal curricula in peacemaking that are available from other organizations.

Goals for the Peacemaking CSAI Process, and How to Become Involved

Following are the mission and objectives developed by the Core Team in facilitating the Peacemaking CSAI process:

Mission: To engage Unitarian Universalist individuals, congregations, and districts in an ongoing process of study, reflection, and action on the Peacemaking CSAI to deepen our faith; to foster a greater sense of association among Unitarian Universalists; and to discern, proclaim, and then act on our vision of peace, justice and security in the world.

Following are the objectives we hope the program will accomplish by the end of the four-year cycle:

1. Have generated an inspiring and comprehensive Statement of Conscience (SOC) on Peacemaking;
2. Have a program in place to engage congregations in an exploration of Peacemaking, resulting in a measurable increase in effectiveness in creating peace at all levels;
3. Have a majority (minimum 25%) of congregations respond to the required vote on the SOC;
4. Based on congregational input, have proposed to the UUA any changes or new programs that would increase UU effectiveness in Peacemaking at all levels; and
5. Have created a model of an effective process for deeply engaging congregations in study, reflection and action for future Congregational Study Action Issues.

We are looking for additional volunteers and congregations that would like to be actively involved in the above, or in developing specific educational projects. A description of volunteer options is available at www.uua.org/csw.

In addition, we encourage individuals to sign on for the Peacemaking Network Mailing List by at <http://lists.uua.org/>, to share ideas and experiences relating to the implementation of the Peacemaking CSAI program.

Again, thank you for your interest in, and any way that you can contribute to, this exciting and historical undertaking!

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