

Ecumenical Social Justice Group

Peace Dale Congregational Church gathered 41 folks from 14 different churches and organizations for a discussion of Social Justice issues on Sunday February 26, 2023.

Pastor Fred Evenson and Don Hermes moderated the gathering, starting with an open discussion of why folks were there.

Topics brought forth included Housing and Poverty, Climate Change, Racial Justice, Women's Issues, Discrimination, Education Opportunities, Homophobia (LGBTQI), Despondent Youth, and a number of others.

We considered 3 goals:

1. Is the idea of an ecumenical social justice group a good idea?
2. If so, what are some important topics to address?
3. Where do we start? Should we form a steering committee, or develop some other structure?

The energy at the meeting was strongly in favor of continuing this effort. This led to a widespread discussion of humanitarian needs in our community. A repeated theme centered about what can we do? One urgent need is to share with each other what our organizations are doing via a newsletter, website, email bursts, etc. but the tasks seemed overwhelming for our first meeting. Therefore, we decided:

- to communicate current activities of each group with other groups to foster and promote shared effort, and
- to create a pre-steering committee to determine a path forward.

A number of attendees stepped up to serve as a pre-steering team to move the group forward in a manageable direction. They will develop ideas and concepts to be presented soon to the full group.

Many stayed on after the business meeting to share more ideas. All in all, this was an exciting first step to address a cooperative approach to dealing with social justice in our community.

Submitted by Don Hermes