

**First Parish Cambridge
Social Justice Council
2019-2020 TASK FORCE APPLICATION**

Task Force Name: Environmental Justice Task Force

Lead organizer: Name: Cynthia Hibbard and Linda Clark

Please answer each question in up to five sentences.

1. Primary issue and goals: We strive to raise awareness and advocate for change to address the devastating impacts of our human activities on climate, ecosystems, and our communities. We understand that climate change is impacting disproportionately those who are least responsible and have the fewest resources to handle the consequences such as flood, famine, health effects, rising sea levels and severe storms. Climate change has already created millions of refugees and accelerated extinction of species and systems we rely on for life. We are hopeful that we can help lead the necessary change in the way we use and allocate resources, in order to reduce impacts while supporting justice, growth and resiliency. We will continue to educate ourselves, FPC members and friends, and to provide opportunities to take action for a just and sustainable world in concert with other UUs and other organizations and faith communities.

2. Task Force strategies and potential activities in 2019-2020 (in as much detail as you know now).

We plan to:

- Continue to collaborate with other faith communities through UU Mass Action, GBIO and UU Climate Collaboration to advocate for renewable energy, reduced use of fossil fuels, Green New Deal principles, and justice and fairness as we transition to a low-carbon economy.
- Collaborate with Mothers Out Front, 350 Mass, and Mass Power Forward to encourage members to join campaigns to move towards renewable energies and away from fossil fuels. Examples include actions to protest natural gas compressor station and pipeline construction, to support fossil fuel divestment, and to support equal protection from pollution. Other examples include influencing policy at the state and local level for 100% renewable energy, and equitable green investments of carbon fees on fuels/transportation. As the state

legislative cycle ends in 2020, we can make a difference! Provide opportunities for members of First Parish to participate in these campaigns through letter writing at coffee hour, letters to the editor, lobbying public officials, and public witness.

- Continue to lead initiatives for sustainable practices at First Parish and support the Green Team in engaging more of the congregation in this work. Work with RE to talk about sustainable practices with children in the program. Work with the Building Committee to include energy efficiency and possibly renewable energy in the plans for Meeting House renovation. Work with Reverend Adam and the Board to consider a possible role for First Parish as part of a climate resiliency hub network.
- Collaborate with others in bringing the urgency of soil and water restoration practices to greater awareness in the public square. Continue to learn about soil sequestration of carbon, water cycle restoration and other practices that have the potential to mitigate climate change.
- Provide educational forums around issues and strategies related to climate change and environmental justice.

3. Grounding and fit: *How is the purpose grounded in our UU Seven Principles, our First Parish mission and covenant, and other aspects of our congregational life.*

EJTF's purpose is aligned with UU principles that acknowledge the inherent worth and dignity of every person, world community with peace, justice and equality of all and respect for the interdependent web of existence. We also are aligned with the Covenant and Mission of First Parish, realizing that environmental justice requires that we work for racial and class justice.

4. Opportunity to make a difference: *What conditions make it likely that the work of the Task Force can make a difference?*

First Parish's early decision to divest from fossil fuels raised our profile in the broader community. We have also been leaders in providing a forum for education, discussion and ideas for addressing climate change - examples include the 2019 Massachusetts Sustainable Campuses and Communities Conference (March 2019), and Senator Marc Pacheco's discussion of climate change legislation (April 2019). This has resulted in many requests and opportunities to participate in outside educational efforts. Our EJTF members are also active and/or leaders in the work of our larger coalition partners, such as 350 Mass, Mothers Out Front, GBIO, UU Mass Action and Mass Power Forward. Through them we lever our ideas, hard work and commitment to make a difference in legislation and in our communities.

5. Accountability: *How will the Task Force work in partnership and be accountable to the communities affected by the issue being worked on? How will it follow our Covenant of Right Relations within its meetings and with other members of the congregation?*

We are guided by the Covenant of Right Relations, and will continue to reflect on our process as it relates to the Covenant. Climate Change is a social justice issue - low-income and vulnerable communities tend to be the most adversely affected. Our efforts to address climate change will be grounded on love, community resilience, and attention to fairness and equal opportunity (e.g. carbon taxes and green infrastructure development). We also support and work with Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE) on regional environmental justice issues (toxics reduction, transportation, and affordable housing).

***Organizers* commit to serving on the task force and actively work on this issue. (At least 5 members of First Parish)**

Name

1. Rosalie Anders
2. Peggy Lynch
3. Linda Clark
4. Ginger Ryan
5. Claryce Evans
6. Sharon DeVos
8. Grace Hall
9. Cynthia Hibbard
10. Sue Donaldson

***Supporters* agree to participate in activities of the task force. (At least 5 members of First Parish).**

Name

1. Marcia Hams
2. David Pap
3. Paul Anders
4. Michele Sprengnether
5. Dan Wells
6. Alison Altman