

Upcoming Changes in Policies and Procedures of Social Action Committee

History: The committee has been studying its leadership role in the life of the church through a variety of avenues which include: 1) the leadership class taught by Rev. Anderson, 2) a social justice workshop facilitated by the MDD Coordinator of Social Justice Ministries, Rev. Deborah Holder, and 3) a social justice workshop facilitated by Rev. Richard Gilbert, the author of *The Prophetic Imperative*. As a result of these learning opportunities, the members of the committee realize that social justice outreach both within the church and community is part of what makes the church a vital, growing organization that can attract a growing, diverse new group of congregants. We believe that some structural changes in how we operate will make the work of the committee much more effective in its leadership role. The suggested changes and rationale for each change follows:

1. Ensure that priorities for social action ministry be chosen by the congregation at an annual meeting in the fall of each year (September or October) preceding the finalization of the church budget for the following year. Persons interested in forming a taskforce to address some form of social action (social education, social witness or advocacy, social service, or community organizing) will be invited to submit a proposal using the Rochester Model strategic planning process, accompanied by a proposed budget. Each group would have five minutes to make a presentation. Proposals will be circulated before the annual meeting. The congregation will then choose at least one project for which it would provide at least some partial funding through the board budget and possibly another that would not require funding. Other projects might be supported in concept, but the ones selected would be given first priority in terms of facility use, attention in services, and use of other resources such as the bulletin board, newsletter and media promotion, etc.

Rationale: This strategy broadens ownership of the social action ministries to the entire congregation creates greater buy-in and involvement.

2. Change the role of the Social Action Committee to a coordinating committee of chairs of all taskforces that deal with one or more of the four areas of social action. The social action committee will meet for one hour once a month on Sunday mornings (11:45-12:45 AM) with the exception of every fourth month. On the fourth month (3 times a year) there will be an evening meeting starting with a potluck. This will be a longer meeting in which the chairs of taskforces will brief the minister, director of religious education and the church president or the president's board representative (the Sunday for the meetings is yet to be chosen). The committee will also track funds from the board and other sources.

Rationale: This meeting and reporting plan will provide better collaboration and coordination of resources and efforts between all of our social action initiatives. The meeting framework will meet the needs of people who are currently working and want very much to attend meetings and people who need for the meetings to be during the daytime for the most part. It also frees up taskforce members other than the chairs to spend their time on taskforce work although anyone who is interested will be free to attend.

3. Additional changes we would like to eventually implement to market and support social action ministries in the church:
 - Develop a quarterly newsletter highlighting social action initiatives.
 - Set up a weekly issues table in the foyer or RE Great Room
 - Develop a fundraising strategy, possibly a social justice foundation to provide more financial assistance to additional taskforces.