

Forum: Faith in Action through Social Justice Ministry

Sunday, May 3, following the 10:15 a.m. service

Psalm 106:3 – Blessed are they who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times!

Results of the recent social justice survey, and what these results suggest in terms of opportunities and responsibilities, will be the focus of the May 3 forum following our 10:15 service. Join church leaders and fellow parishioners in launching a conversation about what putting our faith into action as a church community, and as a church “in the heart of the city with a heart for the city,” means at this point in AHCC’s history. The forum will be an occasion to consider how we might expand our perspective beyond ministries of caring and compassionate outreach, for which AHCC is well known and respected, to include ministries that address in new and meaningful ways the root causes of prejudice, injustice, and exclusion.

Moderator Linda Campanella will present highlights of the survey and facilitate a discussion about next steps. Rev. Peter Grandy will ground the discussion in a scriptural context, reminding us that, among other things, “the Lord loves justice” (Psalm 37:28). Rev. Donald Steinle, executive director of the Hartford-based Christian Activities Council (CAC), will offer theological perspectives on justice as well as some practical realities and strategies for putting faith into action. These strategies – all of them important, interrelated ways of expressing our Christian values – range from what we know as “charity” (meeting the specific needs of specific individuals or groups); to seeking to empower people with tools, opportunities and structures to enable them to be more self-sufficient and self-reliant; to initiating change in the existing social systems and structures in which people live.

Rev. Steinle will help us begin to develop a common vocabulary relating to social justice – what it is generally understood to mean and what it means to AHCC at this time. The mission and purpose of the CAC, working in partnership with its sponsoring urban and suburban congregations, is to foster the development of empowering resources for those in need and to work toward the reform of social structures by providing concrete demonstrable models of Christian engagement in the core city and the metropolitan region.

The dialogue initiated at the forum will continue in coming months under the auspices of a social justice task force being convened by the moderator. Information about the task force will be shared at the May 3 forum.