

What Is Community Church Doing? What Is Happening with GNOUU?



Around the country many wonder about the recovery progress here in New Orleans.

One of my primary roles during the last few months has been sharing our activities with other UUs. As I visit with them, I find many have no idea about the difficulty of living in this area, or the work being done by the Greater New Orleans Unitarian Universalists (GNOUU).

I am sending my answer to the questions above, so those who we do not see will become familiar with our efforts.



GNOUU is a train running on two tracks...

With this metaphor I speak of three UU churches that formed a train that runs on two tracks. The first track is social justice. The second track is recovery.

Regarding social justice, we are planting seeds. We hope to improve ethics in government and revise local views on social justice issues.

We are well aware that our recovery will last for twelve to fifteen years, and maybe more. For this reason, we have begun to work with neighborhood groups, social action agencies, and our elected officials to share an essential of our faith: that all citizens should and will be treated with "justice, equity, and compassion."

This has not been a goal for many in our area. Some like the old patterns of behavior. They accept unequal treatment for the disadvantaged and oppressed. We are beginning to revise the focus in many local dialogs about social justice, planting seeds that point toward fair and equitable treatment for all. We expect to plant such seeds for many years to come.

CCUU has already been working with:

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All Congregations Together,

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Common Good,

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the Beacon of Hope,

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the Lakeview Civic Improvement Association,

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City Park,

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advocates for better mental health facilities,

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advocates for affordable housing,

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the Catholic Campaign for Human Development,

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Unity of Greater New Orleans (homelessness),

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and a local Truth & Reconciliation Commission.

In addition, our three UU churches are setting up the Center for Ethical Living and Social Justice Renewal, soon to have a 501(c) (3) status, so we can continue this work of addressing our local social justice issues.

At the same time, our other track leads to recovery.

CCUU's services are held in our annex, an improvement over our other post-K sites, yet a long ways away from a return to our church. First Church meets in a gutted-out sanctuary. North Shore lost members and pledges. We are asking other UUs for their help, so we can return to our places of worship as we continue to plant our UU seeds in the soils of our community.

Our fundraising effort will have its kickoff on the 29th of March. Materials are now being prepared. An updated GNOUU web site will soon be available. We have begun to make calls to large congregations.

The assistance of many will help us return to our places of worship. For those who are willing to help, you can make a donation to GNOUU at swuuc.org. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

With faith in life,

Jim VanderWeele