

2024 UUA Action for Immediate Witness (AIW) on CLIMATE CHANGE

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Background on UU social witness process Since 1961 when the Unitarians and Universalists merged, an integral part of our UU faith has been to come together to understand and to act on social issues of our times using a method known as our social witness process. This work is grounded in the belief that we are stronger when we work together rather than alone, especially when addressing issues of justice. This process culminates at the annual General Assembly in statements adopted (or not) by the delegates which bear witness and become UUA policy. The process is totally congregationally driven and overseen by the Commission on Social Witness. This year three AIWs were proposed and passed at GA after presentation and debate. Your GA delegates (Dottie Bauer, Steve James and I) will share with you information about each of these AIWs over the next few weeks so that you too as a UU member bear witness to these important social issues of our times.

2024 AIW on Climate Change: "World on Fire: Humanitarian Work and Climate Change" This AIW addresses the impact on people of climate change such as the unprecedented heat waves, an ever growing increase in floods, wildfires, tornadoes, drought and other disasters. These community disasters especially impact the lives of marginalized communities - the very young, the very old, undocumented immigrants, those who are homeless, those who labor outside, etc. It results in illness, disease, food insecurity, loss of one's home, job loss, etc. Our UU purpose and principles call us to use our denominational influence to address this situation. The General Assembly asks Unitarian Universalists to listen to the oppressed and to respond in appropriate ways. We need to not only respond, but also to help prepare our communities for such disasters. This AIW calls for the UUA to take action by joining with other organizations to bring attention to this situation to our national leaders, even to the President of the United States. It calls on congregations like PUUC to be informed of this situation in our own regional, state and local communities and to take action wherever possible.

While this AIW originated from UU congregations in Florida, the issue also is relevant in New England including NH. Just this week there was significant flooding again in NH's North County as well as in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. This issue aligns with the priority of PUUC's Social Justice Committee on climate justice. In addition there are many PUUC members who personally contribute countless hours advocating for climate justice. Does PUUC have other actions we might take to help our community during future heat waves and other disasters? Is there a role for us to share the cool space in our basement on hot days for residents in our community to find much needed relief from their homes, perhaps a light summer meal, or a cool place for children to play indoors? Should we reach out and help other UU congregations when disasters happen in their communities such as the Vermont congregation that lost at least the use of their first floor due to flooding last summer? Let's continue the conversation this year and take action where needed when disasters brought on by climate change impact the marginalized in our community. Let us be part of the 2024 UU Action for Immediate Witness on Climate Change.

(For more details on the Climate Change AIW, see <https://www.uua.org/action/statements/world-fire-humanitarian-work-and-climate-change>