



Report of the Commission on Social Witness March, 2018

Dear Congregational Members, Leaders and Delegates to GA 2018:

Between the 2017 and 2018 General Assemblies of the UUA, the Commission on Social Witness (CSW) solicited proposals for new congregational study action issues that delegates could consider at the 2018 GA for four years of study and action. Congregations submitted three proposals, which the CSW reviewed to ensure they met the criteria for consideration. The CSW recommended that proposers combine two proposals that were very similar, which they did. The CSW accepted the combined proposal plus the remaining one (total of two) for inclusion in the congregational poll. Upon learning of the proposed CSAIs, one proposer asked either to withdraw or to explore the possibility of creating one combined CSAI out of the remaining two. In response and in keeping with its concern about pitting one social justice concern against another, when there are many legitimate concerns, the CSW agreed to facilitate meetings of the representatives from the proposing congregations. That decision necessitated postponing posting as part of the congregational poll the proposed CSAIs past the November date to early January. During November & December, the CSW facilitated three 2-hour calls to consider consolidation. The final decision of the proposing congregations was to submit two separate proposals, which were posted to the Congregational poll.

Of the 934 congregations certified to vote in the congregational poll, 478 or 51% voted “Yes,” “No,” or “Abstain” on one or more of the issues. As a result of the poll, the CSW submitted the following two issues for inclusion in the final agenda, each of which received a majority of Yes votes: “[Undoing Intersectional White Supremacy](#)” and “[Dismantling Intersectional Oppression](#).”

The CSW solicited and reviewed comments on the current CSAI: The Corruption of Our Democracy and planned a presentation on the issue for the 2018 GA. Additional information on this CSAI is available at <https://www.uua.org/action/process/csais/corruption-of-our-democracy>.

We also revised information on the UUA web site related to CSW activities and judged submissions for the Social Witness Sermon Contest that the CSW co-sponsors with the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA). Working with the IT staff at the UUA, we massaged processes for engaging off site delegates in the CSAI and AIW processes at GA.

The CSW spent time during its meetings, at the 2016 and 2017 GA’s, in conversations with the UUA Board and staff, and during two videoconferences open to the public on a discernment process about how to engage in social witness work more effectively at the association level and during GA. By the 2019 GA, we expect to bring forth proposals for changes as a result of these conversations. This year, the CSW consulted with the UUA Board on revisions to the UUA bylaws, proposing the elimination of inappropriate levels of detail. The proposed bylaws amendments do not change any current practice and the detailed information still exists in the Proposer’s Guides that are available at <https://www.uua.org/action/process/guide>.

The main CSW activities at the GA 2018 are

- A mini-assembly on the two proposed congregational study action issues for 2018-2022;

- Debate and Vote on adopting a new congregational study action issue (CSAI) for 2018-2022;
- Proposing, collecting signatures, and voting on Actions of Immediate Witness (AIWs);
- Mini-assemblies to propose amendments to Proposed AIWs;
- Workshop on the Congregational Study/Action Issue “The Corruption of Our Democracy”;
- A hearing on the newly selected CSAI;
- A worship service that features the social witness sermon contest winner; and
- Debate and Vote on adopting Actions of Immediate Witness.

We will be in the Exhibit Hall (booth #610). Come visit us with any questions or suggestions for engaging in social witness activities during GA.

**Mr. Richard Bock, Dr. Susan Goekler,
Rev. Dr. Meredith Garmon, and Ms. Jyaphia Christos-Rodgers**