

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMISSION REPORT TO 2021 CONVENTION

Members During the Past Year

Ms. Leah Gregg (Co-chair)
Ms. Cynthia Pease (Co-Chair)
The Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas *ex-officio*
The Rt. Rev. Douglas J. Fisher *ex-officio*
The Rev. Lauren Holm *ex-officio*
The Rev. Vicki Ix *ex-officio*
Ms. Alexizendria Link
The Rev. Linda Taupier
The Rev. Jane Tillman
The Rev. David Woessner

Since last convention, the SJC has worked on many fronts, including creation care, gun violence, trafficking of girls and women, indigenous rights, and farm workers' rights.

The commission supported Stand with Iraqi Christians both financially and through appeals to congregations in the Diocese. Newsletters also provided information on sites in the Diocese that teach about the indigenous history of the corridors. Members would like to see land recognition be part of every committee/commission meeting.

Stand-outs have been held at the Savage Arms and Smith and Wesson plants to protest the proliferation of military-grade weaponry.

Bending Toward Justice, which honors the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., was presented virtually this year, with Canon Stephanie Spellers as the keynote speaker. By the time of convention, we will be planning this year's second virtual event and the third Bending Toward Justice. At the event, in addition to a keynote speaker, we offer breakout affinity rooms where attendees can learn more about ministries associated with the Diocese. In 2021, breakout rooms dealt with Beloved Community, gun violence, creation care, immigration, and the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.

The commission has supported bills in the state Legislature, particularly this year Bill No. HD.3437/SD.2115, An Act to Strengthen Justice and Support for Sex-Trade Survivors, sponsored by the Equality Model in MA Coalition (EMMA).

The commission also petitioned the President-Elect last year to address the fossil-fueled climate emergency and advance a thriving, clean, and democratic energy economy that works for all and to oppose a bill that allows biomass subsidies in our national forests out West. Members have been active in opposing a biomass plant locally (and were successful) and continue to oppose Eversource's intention to expand gas pipelines in Springfield and Longmeadow.

More recently we cosponsored a rally in Springfield to press Congressman Richie Neal to fully fund the budget reconciliation bill. The Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas was a speaker at the event.

At present, the commission is working on encouraging congregations in the Diocese to become involved in a global climate emergency action that was to be held on October 17 and 18, two weeks ahead of the UN's COP26 climate crisis convention in Glasgow.

Respectfully submitted,

Leah Gregg and Cynthia Pease, Co-Chairs