

GETTING INVOLVED

This is the easy part. Simply contact us and indicate your interest in learning more about what we do and how to get involved. There are a lot of new ideas and energy at this time, a number of new programs and opportunities and there is a very strong sense of how we can play a more critical social action role in the growth of First Parish.

We usually meet on the last Sunday of the month prior to church at 9:15 a.m.

Please join us.

CONTACT *Al Jacobson* (617-868-7301),
or watch the "Focalpoint" newsletter.

Programs and contacts:

STAND HIGH, STAND UNITED

Pete Tasker 781-861-1754

BASICS/ONTRAC

Marty Kvaal 781-862-6273

UU URBAN MINISTRY and

RENEWAL HOUSE

Connie Counts 781-862-6029

JoAnn Mulready-Shick 781-863-0977

DIGNITY DINNER

Linda and Bob Coyne 781-862-1927

KEEPING FP GREEN

Jenny Stirling 781-221-7874

Joan Keane 781-861-8351

NGOMBE/ZAMBIA

Allen Armstrong 781-861-0029

Connie Evans 781-863-0763

Cris Carter 781-861-1538

Liz Adams 781-862-3365

Susanna Kamon 617-864-8993

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“*You must be the
change you wish to
see in the world.*”

—Mahatma Gandhi

SOCIAL ACTION AT FIRST PARISH

Social action at First Parish flows from our individual responses to conditions in the world and our personal quest to enhance our spirituality. We do this within the supportive environment of our broader church community and the mission of First Parish "...to act on our values to serve the larger community and create a more just and loving world." Social action is therefore a way in which each of us can contribute to the realization of this mission statement and make our vision of a better, more just, and equitable world a reality.

Helen Cohen, our former senior minister, stated: *Social action* provides **meaning** to our own lives by forcing us to look beyond our own lives, to risk ourselves, and to learn from others. *Social action* further enables us to attach real **compassion** to what otherwise might be abstract principles of justice and equity, and *Social action* offers us a way to **celebrate** our blessings with others.

It is in these very central ways that social action serves to enhance our quest to become more spiritual individuals.

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*How we live
determines who we are*

SOCIAL ACTION

— ■ —
ENHANCING
OUR

Spirituality

THROUGH
THE PRACTICE OF

Justice,

Equity

and

Compassion

in

Our

Community

— ■ —
AT FIRST PARISH

Lexington

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Social Action Committee at First Parish designs and sponsors social justice activities at the local, national, and international levels.

● **UU Urban Ministry (UUUM)** in Boston. Participating in Stand High, Stand United, a youth and mentoring program for children ages 8-12, Renewal House, a shelter for battered and abused women and their children, Basics/OnTrac, an after school mentoring program for grades 2-5.

● **Keep First Parish Green**— sharing ways we can change personal habits and behaviors that adversely impact our environment and the long term health of our planet. A bi-weekly educational awareness column, “The Green Corner,” appears in church newsletter, Focalpoint.

● **Ngombe AIDS Children Center**— building a longterm community-based partnership with a children’s center in Zambia. Members of FP Lexington are providing financial support for the children to attend school and for initiating sustained income generating projects.

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*Social action is part of my
spiritual practice*
— ■ —

*“Injustice
anywhere
is a threat to
justice
everywhere.”*

—Martin Luther King Jr.

In addition to these three programs, the committee is involved with:

Second Collection: a plate collection aimed at supporting individuals’ pursuit of their own social action causes and programs (Habitat for Humanity)

Dignity Dinner: a Boston soup kitchen serving the homeless population

Peanut Butter & Jelly Sunday: collection held the first Sunday of every month and donated to a local food pantry

UU Service Committee: to help fund international and domestic social justice programs

Good Samaritan Fund: provides short-term relief to an individual or family in Lexington

John and Ruth Beebe Award: presented to a member of First Parish for outstanding service to the community

A Social Action Experience

During a Sunday worship service, one of our members told

just how “fulfilled” she felt as a result of volunteering recently in a Boston soup kitchen. This was an extraordinary reaction, considering that it required driving an hour and half through a major snowstorm to a kitchen in downtown Boston on a Friday evening at the end of a tiring work week.

But it was what awaited her when she arrived that was the source of her fulfillment: a room filled with homeless men and women, each one affirming their own dignity by their presence at the dinner table; and a crew of dedicated and highly committed volunteers. Our First Parish member drew a renewed sense of strength and purpose. When she arrived home that evening, she felt a surge of energy and sense of “fulfillment” regarding who she was, the choices she was making in her life, and her membership in the First Parish community that was supporting this work.