

## Proposal: Justice, Compassion & Love Team

### Proposal Overview: Advancing Justice and Compassion in Our Society

In today's national climate, our Church must actively reflect Jesus's teachings by serving our neighbors, focusing especially on the needy and underserved. Doing this requires a strong commitment to social justice and advocacy. The Team will help the Church to identify ways it can make a meaningful and visible impact, together and in partnership with the broader faith community.

#### Social Justice Advocacy and Church Leadership

- How might we better communicate our shared Christian values and agendas with the wider public?
- Might we encourage Church members to participate in public gatherings, such as one planned for Flag Day – Saturday, June 14?
- How might we work in concert with the Addison Association, the Vermont Conference, and/or the national UCC, to convey effectively to the broader public our commitment to Justice, Compassion, and Love?
- What are our pastors' roles in social justice advocacy, in worship and outside of church?

#### Navigating Compassionate and Political Actions

- How can we focus on promoting compassion and equality while remaining independent of political entities or political advocacy? Doing this keeps our mission centered on love and service.
- Can our Christian witness be made more visible beyond our Church's walls and in the wider community. Are there ways that it can, perhaps indirectly, help influence the outcomes of actions by governmental processes?

#### Uplifting the Dignity of Those in Marginalized Groups

- Our Church Covenant embraces the goal: "To see Christ in every human being and to value each person as an individual." ... "We promote justice by caring for the sick, feeding the hungry, and helping the disadvantaged among us, both at home and abroad."
- Tangible opportunities for doing this may include:
  - **Supporting the Immigrant Community:** How can we support various Church groups and our Pastors in responding to the needs of the immigrant community in Addison County?
  - **Supporting the LGBTQ+ Community:** How can we assist our Church and Pastors in better supporting the LGBTQ+ community? Can we take tangible steps that reaffirm our commitment to welcoming all with equality and love?
  - **Inviting Church members to publicly affirm Christian values:** Joining an interfaith gathering to promote Peace? Participating in a Pride Parade? Developing a statement that proclaims the Church's support for humane policies by government agencies?

Our Team aims to assist our Congregation in planning and in action grounded in faith, with the goal of a more just world for all. Through leadership, partnerships, and initiatives, we can live our call to serve and advocate for all God's people.

### **Organization of the Committee**

The Justice, Compassion, & Love Team would serve as an ad hoc group in a way that mirrors that of the Green Team. Substantive recommendations would be advanced to Church Boards, the Church Council, and/or our Pastors, as appropriate.

Initially, the members of the Justice, Compassion, & Love Team would be: Judy Albright, John Emerson (coordinator), Caitlin Myers, and Pastor Andy Nagy-Benson (staff liaison). **We hope to expand our core Team by one or two members, and to enlist many more Church members as allies in pursuit of the goals we have identified.**

The Justice, Compassion, & Love Team would meet monthly, or as needed.

As with other groups, the Justice, Compassion, & Love Team would report to the Church at the Annual Meeting. Communication from the Team to the Congregation would be mostly through the weekly mailings from the Church office.

### **Postscript**

Our nation's emerging social and political climate led to three well-attended meetings and discussions after morning worship on January 5, 19, and February 2, 2025. The high level of interest and participation by the congregation led us to propose this team. We are grateful for the input, advice, and responses we have received from several Church members and from our Pastors.

*May 16, 2025 approved for submission to Church Council*

*Judy Albright, John Emerson, Elizabeth Gleich, and Caitlin Myers*