

Follen Church Society  
755 Massachusetts Ave  
Lexington, Ma 02420

## **Social Justice Action Team Procedure** ***Request to Initiate a New Social Justice Action***

*We the Friends and Members of the Follen Church Society, “.....Commit ourselves to justice, service, and increased harmony with nature through thoughtful, compassionate, and courageous action;....”*

Members or Friends of the Follen Church Society as defined by the By-laws may request formal recognition of a social justice action at Follen Church from the SJAT by completing and submitting to SJAT a “Request to Initiate a New Social Justice Action” form. There are three categories of Social Justice Actions:

1. **Social Justice Program** -- This is an on-going social justice action and continues year to year. It must be led by a task force of at least four Follen Members and Friends of which one must join or already be a member of the SJAT.
2. **Social Justice Project** -- This is a social justice project usually lasting no more than one church year.
3. **Action of Immediate Witness** -- This is a one-time or short duration social justice action such as a rally, demonstration, petition drive or natural disaster requiring immediate response.

Once the SJAT receives your completed “Request to Initiate a Social Justice Action” form, your request will be placed on the agenda for the next scheduled meeting of the SJAT. **If time is of the essence and immediate action on the request is required, contact one of the co-chairs.**

You and/or a Follen Friend or Member will be invited to attend the SJAT meeting to discuss your request.

The SJAT evaluates each request to determine:

- It is consistent with the Mission and Vision of the Follen Church Society and its long range plan,
- It is consistent with the Principles and Purposes of the UUA,
- It is within the acceptable bounds set by the IRS for a 501(c)(3). For example it is not acceptable to endorse a candidate for elected office..
- It does not exceed the available resources.
- For proposed Social Justice Programs and Projects, at least four Follen Members or Friends are willing to serve on the task force to manage it, and
- It has clear and measurable goals.

Although Social Justice Programs are intended to last more than one church year, they must be renewed each year by vote of the SJAT. This is done as one of the action items to prepare the Annual Plan for the coming year.

As Amended December 23, 2011

- A proposed Social Justice Program will be accepted in “Preliminary Status” for one full calendar year by majority vote of the SJAT. The intent is to give the Program an opportunity to develop wide support within the congregation,
- Once a Social Justice Program has been in “Preliminary Status” for one full calendar year, it will be accepted in “Permanent Status” by majority vote of the SJAT.

Social Justice Programs, Projects and Actions approved by the SJAT receive the following benefits, unless otherwise specified by SJAT:

- You may circulate a petition and invite Follen members and friends to sign as individuals,
- You may set up a publicity table during coffee hour to solicit support from Follen members and friends,
- You may submit articles and announcements for official Follen communications such as the Friday all-congregational email, newsletter or Follen website.
- Provided you have received approval from the Chair of the Stewardship Committee for each fundraiser, you may solicit financial support from Follen members and Friends, and
- You may request use of Follen’s Sanctuary, Community Center or meeting rooms for meetings and other activities consistent with their action free of charge

For Programs and Projects only, you may state in your written publicity that the Program or Project is a recognized social justice action of Follen Church and the SJAT. For an Action of Immediate Witness, you may state that SJAT gave approval for the Action to occur on church premises and using church resources as specified above. SJAT also may vote to recognize the Action of Immediate Witness, upon request or in the discretion of SJAT.

Note that ‘Recognition’ by the SJAT is not an endorsement of a particular position or point of view on the social issue being addressed by the Program, Project or Action of Immediate Witness. However, SJAT may endorse a particular position or point of view on a social issue, upon request or in the discretion of SJAT

**Reports:** Written reports from the task groups responsible for Actions of Immediate Witness and Social Justice Projects are requested to be submitted to the SJAT within a month after they are completed. Reports for on-going Social Justice Programs, are to be submitted to SJAT by April 1 of each year. The reports should summarize the activities undertaken and whether and how well the Program’s objectives were met.

**Records:** Reports and completed “Request to Initiate a New Social Justice Action” forms will be filed with the clerk of the Parish Board and copies will be placed in the “Social Justice Action Team Reports and Forms” notebook maintained by the church administrator and located outside the Minister’s office.