

Follen Church
The Charter
of the
Social Justice Action Team (SJAT)

Amended & Approved 6-7-15

Mission:

“[May] this church never be desecrated by intolerance, or bigotry, or party spirit; more especially its doors might never be closed against any one, who would plead in it the cause of oppressed humanity; within its walls all unjust and cruel distinctions might cease, and [there] all men might meet as brethren.” - Charles Follen. We therefore commit ourselves to justice, service, and increased harmony with nature through thoughtful, compassionate, and courageous action at Follen and the wider community.

Purpose:

To these ends the SJAT will:

- Provide leadership, coordination, and resources to support Follen’s congregation in achieving the church’s social justice mission within the congregation and to have greater impact in the wider community.
- Engage the congregation every two years to consider both current needs and how Follen is best suited to meet them.

Types of Activities:

SJAT activities at Follen fall into four categories. Each SJAT activity and its category must be approved by SJAT:

- **Social Justice Partner:** an external social justice program with which Follen has, or is establishing, a long-term relationship of volunteer, leadership, and financial support.
- **Social Justice Program:** an ongoing social justice program continuing year to year. It must be led by a subteam of at least four Follen Members and Friends, of which one must be a member of SJAT.
- **Social Justice Project:** a social justice project lasting no more than one church year.

- Action of Immediate Witness: a one-time social justice action event such as a rally, demonstration, petition drive, or natural disaster requiring immediate response.

Membership: The voting membership of SJAT will consist of one representative from each active subteam, plus members-at-large. A member-at-large must be actively involved in social justice at Follen, but not serving as a subteam representative. All voting members of the Social Justice Action Team (SJAT) must be Members or Friends of Follen Church as defined by its by-laws. Members-at-large may be added or removed by majority vote of the SJAT. Only Follen Members may vote on budgetary or other matters. A list of SJAT members shall be published and distributed by November 1 each year.

Meetings: All regular meetings of SJAT are open and the Action Team welcomes any member of the Follen Community to participate. The SJAT will meet at least once a month during the church year. For votes on budget or other non-procedural matters, a quorum of at least 25% of the Action Team members must be present, along with one co-chair.

Responsibilities:

Co-chairs:

- SJAT shall be led by two co-chairs. The immediate past co-chair shall remain available for consultation upon request.
- Each co-chair shall serve a two-year term, with one year overlapping.
- Co-chairs will be elected by majority vote of SJAT membership.
- Co-chairs will ensure that SJAT also selects an Action Team Representative to Program Council (who is elected at Annual Meeting). Typically a co-chair will be the Action Team Representative to Program Council, although it may be any member of SJAT. The AT Representative will designate an alternate to attend Program Council meetings or other meetings if the elected Representative is not available.
- The AT Representative shall invite participation and cooperation of other Program Council representatives in looking for ways to broaden consciousness of and participation in social justice work throughout Follen.

The co-chairs also will:

- Prepare an annual SJAT budget proposal for the following fiscal year, submit it for approval by SJAT, and forward it to the Finance & Human Resources Action Team
- Prepare the agenda for each meeting of SJAT.
- Facilitate each meeting of SJAT.
- Prepare (or have prepared) and distribute minutes of each SJAT meeting.
- Coordinate appropriate publications and communication media, represent the SJAT at meetings and other activities to encourage broad participation in social justice activities at Follen.

- Prepare an annual report of SJAT activities for the church's Annual Report; prepare an annual plan for the following year; prepare long-term plans periodically as requested by church leadership.

Action Team Members:

Individually and collectively will:

- Attend, actively participate, vote, and share the work at SJAT meetings, including sending one representative from each subteam to the monthly meeting.
- Support and/or participate in social justice activities and assist in forming new subteams.
- Engage with other Follen Action Teams and groups to provide coordination and resources to SJAT activities.
- Establish relationships with social justice committees at other area houses of worship and other external social justice organizations (local, state, federal and international)
- Identify and articulate the long-term goals of the team and of Follen Church.