



## Maine Conference Social Action Committee Annual Report September 2024

Greetings to the Maine UCC, from your Maine Conference Social Action Committee (SAC)!

Following last fall's tragic events in Lewiston, the Social Action Committee focused over the winter and spring of 2024 on the issue of gun violence. Together with our Conference Minister, Marisa Laviola, members of SAC held three "sacred conversation" workshops in February to address our grief and how we might respond as faithful members of our communities. These workshops were hosted by our partners in faith at High Street Congregational Church UCC in Auburn, Waterville Congregational Church UCC and Hammond Street Congregational Church UCC in Bangor.

Discussions at these three sessions were primarily focused on both personal and collective grief after the Lewiston shooting. Many churches reported what actions they are taking to address gun safety in Maine. Participants also provided feedback with many pointing to a desire for action steps by the Maine Conference and the Social Action Committee. Such action is also supported by a 2013 Conference resolution "An Urgent Call for the Prevention of Gun Violence".

Subsequently, several members of SAC testified in writing and in person to several bills introduced to the Maine Legislature around this issue.

Following a relatively quiet summer, we are making plans to lead a workshop at this fall's Annual Meeting: **We Need Better Laws, for God's Sake: Faith in Advocacy**. Our goal is to lead you in exploring and using tools that enable participation in legislative advocacy. Members of the SAC will share with you their experiences; orient you to the Maine Legislature website for submitting testimony; help you practice drafting a statement in response to actual proposed legislation; and talk about how to do this kind of advocacy as both your own faith in action and on behalf of a religious organization.

We hope you will be able to join us at the Annual Meeting and at our workshop on Saturday morning October 19,

and we thank you for your support and interest in our work.

### **The Social Action Committee for the Maine Conference UCC**

- Stephen Hastings (C) – Katahdin Association, (Chair), stephenh11656@gmail.com - At-Large Member • John Brooking – Cumberland Association - johnbrooking4@gmail.com • Linda Depew – Katahdin Association - ldepew@fairpoint.net
- Alice Duston – Sunrise Association - aliceduston1944@gmail.com – At-Large Member • Dianne Morse-Leonard– Oxford Union Association - dmorseleonard@gmail.com
- Ian Lynch (C) – Living Water Association / MEUCC Board Rep. - revianlynch@gmail.com • Hannah Mondrach - Sunrise Association - hannah.mondrach@gmail.com • Kathy Woodside – Sunrise Association - woodsidekat@gmail.com - At-Large Member • Debbie Duval - Cumberland Association - [debbie@highstreet-ucc.org](mailto:debbie@highstreet-ucc.org) - At-Large