

PSEC Justice and Witness Team Joins POWER/POWER Metro

The PSEC Justice and Witness Team has voted unanimously to become a member of POWER and POWER Metro.

Introduction to POWER and POWER Metro

POWER is a non-partisan, interfaith organization committed to building communities of opportunity that work for all. POWER focuses on issues that directly affect the quality of life in our communities such as education, economic justice, criminal justice reform and health care. At the center of POWER's faith-based community organizing efforts is the belief in potential transformation; transformation of people, institutions, and our larger culture. This belief stems directly from the shared principles of POWER's faith communities.

POWER originally began its community organizing efforts representing congregations and faith leaders throughout the city of Philadelphia. The work of POWER has now spread into the Philadelphia Metropolitan Areas representing congregations and faith leaders in Bucks, Montgomery, Chester, and Delaware counties, under the banner POWER Metro. The newest branch of POWER is POWER Central, representing congregations and faith leaders in York, Lancaster, Dauphin, and Lebanon counties.

The four central and on going campaigns within POWER are work in Education Justice, Economic Justice, Criminal Justice Reform, and Healthcare. The fifth and newest campaign emerging is that of Climate Justice and Green Jobs. Undergirding all of the work of POWER, POWER Metro, and POWER Central is the crusade for racial justice.

Rationale for Joining POWER/POWER Metro

3 Great Loves

As the Justice and Witness Team became more familiar with the work of POWER through conversations with POWER leaders, organizers, congregations, and faith leaders already involved with POWER, we saw an alignment with the UCC 3 Great Loves values and goals. The 3 Great Loves are: Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, and Love of Creation. These 3 Great Loves align with the POWER initiatives of Racial and Economic Justice (Love of Neighbor), Educational Justice (Love of Children), and Climate Justice and Green Jobs (Love of Creation).

PSEC 2020 Vision

Additionally, the Justice and Witness Team sees an alignment with the PSEC 2020 Vision as stated in the objectives of that Vision:

Objective #5 - "Turning our churches inside out to focus on the local community transformation as much as church, tradition, growth and discipleship." Partnering with POWER better equips the Justice and Witness Team to engage justice work beyond the walls of our churches, in order to affect community change.

Objective #12 – Answering the call to "experiment with new ministry models and collaborative partnerships." Never before has the Justice and Witness Team become a member and collaborative partner with a separate, faith-based, community organization such as POWER. Likewise, incorporating

an entire judicatory body (such as the PSEC Justice and Witness Team) is also a new form of collaboration for POWER. It is the hope of the Justice and Witness Team that this new ministry model will inspire other congregations and ministry settings within the PSEC to cooperate ecumenically in working for social justice.

Objective #14 – “Identifying at least two social justice issues impacting the communities in our conference, offering prophetic witness through op-ed pieces, protest rallies, social media campaigns, member education and all other effective means for the advancement of just and generous Christian values.” POWER effectively focuses on five main social justice issues as described above (Education Justice, Economic Justice, Criminal Justice Reform, Healthcare, and Climate Justice). Collaborating with POWER allows the Justice and Witness Team to even more effectively engage in prophetic witness. The additional resources, events, and members of POWER help compliment and amplify the work of the Justice and Witness Team.

In Conclusion

The PSEC Justice and Witness Team sees its relationship with POWER and POWER Metro as one that will serve as a conduit to share with the PSEC congregations concrete opportunities for advocacy and justice work. There will also be opportunities for leadership training - for clergy and lay alike - in public advocacy. We see the relationship as an opportunity magnify our voice in affecting positive transformation in southeastern Pennsylvania.

For Further Information

The PSEC Justice and Witness Team would be glad to answer any questions and/or hear your comments on our new relationship with POWER. If you have a question or comment, would like to attend a Justice and Witness meeting, or are interested in joining the team, please email the Chairperson, Rev. Leslie Kearney (Pastor.Kearney@gmail.com).