Your *STL Association Council* wants you to know that from the very beginning of the events in *Ferguson*, **UCC** folks have been there offering succor, help where needed and marching for JUSTICE. You may not have been aware of the **UCC** response yet it has been there. We are very thankful for those who have been there and also for those who have been supporting and praying for our **UCC** efforts.

*Micah 6:8 reminds us that we must* ***Do*** *JUSTICE—in other words—take action;* ***Love*** *or act with KINDNESS---in other words be kind--****speak*** *TRUTH with love: and* ***walk*** *HUMBLY with our GOD.* Some of our clergy and lay folks have been *doing* JUSTICE from day one after the shooting of Michael Brown and have been there almost daily helping with needs of our *Ferguson* neighbors:

* praying with those who are grieving the death of Michael Brown;
* praying with those who are suffering in any way;
* praying for Officer Wilson;
* listening to the youth who are seeking JUSTICE;
* providing for the physical needs of all;
* talking with police officers;
* marching and witnessing in *Ferguson, Clayton, Crestwood, Webster Groves and elsewhere*;
* providing activities for school children who were not able to attend school for days;
* registering people to vote and distributing needed goods to the citizens of *Ferguson*;
* attending meetings of the **UCC**, other faiths and organizations to respond to God’s call.

We know many of you have watched the news and programs that have been on TV, have read articles in the paper, been on social media and may still be uncertain of what our still-speaking **God** is calling each of us to do as churches and persons of faith. Hopefully your church received the news in mid-August that faith communities were asked to provide for some physical needs by collecting items needed (food, toiletries, paper goods and the like) so we could feel like we were “doing something”. **UCC** churches were asked to collect baby food & formula and paper towels and our hope is that we all were a part of that effort. Those items were taken to various collection sites and then distributed to citizens who had been unable to get to local stores. In addition, you may have seen the TV news and specials, as well as other social media where some of our stalwart justice- seeking **UCC** folks were featured. There have been other **UCC** members who have been out there seeking justice as well—too many to list here. We do want to thank ALL of our **UCC** folks who have been doing whatever they were able to do during this unsettling time. Please do the something we can all do--PRAY for JUSTICE FOR ALL, which brings PEACE and pray for healing for ALL that we may find new ways of living with and caring for all people. In addition, we pray for our **UCC** churches in North County as they strive to do God’s will in their own community.

As your *Association Council*, we want you to know that we are looking to the future for *Ferguson* and all of our communities in the metro STL region. And we also look towards the future for our own **UCC** churches as we seek to find ways to heal the racial hurts we have been a part of, intentionally or not, and find ways to understand the issues of racism and white privilege so that we can help to change the inequalities in our society. We will need your prayers and your involvement as we proceed. Please know that this long-term effort will be challenging and slow in arriving as we determine the best practices to use. We do see **God** speaking through the various faith leaders and lay folk who continue to be on the ground in *Ferguson*, as well as in our larger community. *This is where we have found God speaking as we work for the necessary changes that are needed in our communities and our country.*

While we are putting these methods in place, we want you to know that you can contact the Conference office to get on a special mailing list if you want to be directly involved. Some of what we will definitely need is: folks for an advisory board who have had anti-racism/oppression training; folks who may not have had training but have a profound desire for racial healing; and folks who are willing to mobilize for dialogue, marches and other gatherings. If you wish to be involved in either way, please call Josh Gibson @ the Conference office—314-918-2601.

In the meantime, the best way to see how you can be directly involved is to visit the interfaith website: prayingwithourfeet.org. This site lists lots of events to attend and practical things to do. We encourage you to attend anything whether it is officially **UCC** or not.

