



# Church Women United in Madison, Wisconsin

[www.churchwomenunited-madison.net](http://www.churchwomenunited-madison.net)

C.W.U. Newsletter April, 2016 No. 9

## Friday, May 6, 2016 May Friendship Day *Finding Grace at the Table*

10:30 am Annual Meeting  
11:30 am Luncheon  
12:15 pm Worship Service

Plymouth United Church of Christ  
2401 Atwood Avenue, Madison 53704

Make Reservations by May 2  
Cost is \$8 per person  
Checks Payable to Church Women United  
Mail to Marleen Lippert  
6329 Scandia Lane  
McFarland WI 53558

### **May Friendship Day**

On May 6, we will gather at Plymouth United Church of Christ, 2401 Atwood Avenue, Madison 53704, for our May Friendship Day celebration. This includes our annual meeting during which we elect officers, a luncheon, and a worship service centered on Finding Grace at the Table. You may park across the street from Plymouth in St. Bernard's parking lot, since Plymouth's parking area is small. The church has a lift, and all parts of the day will be on the lower level. The luncheon is catered, so we will need reservations ahead of time. The cost is \$8 a person, so mail your checks to Marleen Lippert, 6329 Scandia Lane, McFarland, 53558, by May 2. Make the checks payable to Church Women United.

We will be receiving the Fellowship of the Least Coin offering at this meeting, so bring your church's collection for FLC. Faith Bauman will send this year's total collection to FLC's national office afterwards.

As a way to introduce other women to Church Women United, the key women are inviting new church women to the May friendship luncheon as their guests. Crystal Betterley is coordinating this outreach project.

### **April Forum**

We met in the Oaks Community Room of Oakwood Village University Woods for our forum on Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice. Martha Nack, chaplain at University Woods, welcomed us and provided a brief but comprehensive look at the faith-based retirement communities that comprise Oakwood-University Oaks and Prairie Ridge. Both have full-time chaplains, with backups on call. She stated, "We are here to support people in their own faith journeys." They encourage people to stay connected to their own faith groups and enhance that with Oakwood's offerings. They have Shabbat once a month, other faith communities bring services, they offer ecumenical worship services three times a week. They are starting a study on Muslim neighbors and have all kinds of programs and services. Thirty-seven Lutheran congregations support them.

She passed out three booklets that provided more detailed information. Several Oakwood residents, both CWU members and other residents, attended to learn more about our topic.

Our speaker, Dace Zeps, provided a close look at the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, founded in 1991 as a coalition of activist groups and citizens of conscience within Wisconsin. Their mission is to advance a sustainable world free from violence and injustice by connecting, engaging, and strengthening member groups and serving as a catalyst for immunity organizing and education. Their vision is of a peaceful, just, and sustainable world.

The impetus for its beginning was the invasion of Afghanistan, based on ideas of peace, nonviolence, and antiwar sentiments. Peace can only exist when there is no oppression, no environmental degradation, no war. Issues involving the environment, worker rights, immigrant rights, and much more drive the movement. There are at least 150 organizations, coalitions, and networks that are part of WNPJ at any one time. They have had as many as 400 individual members over these 25 years. Right now there are about 200.

The focus of her talk was their new campaign on the Racial Justice Tipping Point. They have actively petitioned and attended state legislature meetings. They reject hate, bigotry, violent words as inappropriate. Recent reports show that we live in the most incarcerated city, county, and state in the world. The network calls out racism in all the places they see it—housing, jobs, policing, processes. [Young, Gifted and Black is a member.] Systemic racism is a major problem. It's got to stop. Churches have both the ability and the obligation to bring the message to their congregation.

WNPJ has developed a kit for dealing with this issue. If we can change 3.5% of the population, we can change Madison, Dane, the world. "To make the Racial Justice Tipping Point campaign successful we will use grassroots organizing strategies to not only bring people together, but to make sure we are taking the small steps to make the big shifts that we need in order to make Wisconsin a more racially equitable state. While many organizations within our networks have an explicit focus on racial justice issues such as immigrant rights, white anti-racism, Black Lives Matter, American Indian human rights, and Hmong self-determination, we will also be partnering with organizations outside our networks to build the power we need to win real improvements in people's lives.

"We plan to have a gathering of individuals and organizations in the Spring of 2016 to train people on how to engage others in their local areas. We will be selecting 3 predominately white and 3 people of color led organizations for a Cohort of Support which will be taken through organizational assessments, trainings, and strategic planning to strengthen their work for racial justice."

This is only a taste of the information and discussions at the forum. Examples of our problems, reports of working to change the realities that hold people back, the responses of churches, such as First Methodist's ministry to homeless families that made the newspapers this week, led to much discussion. Different parts of Madison view our city in very different ways. The Darbo neighborhood receives more police patrols than other parts of Madison. That affects neighbors' perceptions. Many view Madison as a place of privilege, but Madison is not wealthy. Fifty-one percent of Madison households make less than \$30,000 a year. Dace emphasized that talking to each other, telling stories about our lives, listening to others' stories is a big part of what we need to do. We can change this, but it takes all of us.

As a final focus, our speaker asked us questions about CWU. What is our central mission? Working together as ecumenical community for peace and justice. When were we founded? Preceding group in Madison, 1924, the national organization in the 1940's. Why? Power in numbers, the desire of women in the 1920's in faith communities to work together in targeted projects. What accomplishments have we done this year? Our meeting at St. Paul's AME church to hear about what it is like to be black in Madison, and providing \$1400 worth of new books for ARC children and their mothers.

We ran well past our usual 11am quitting time, with nobody leaving mid-discussion. This was an excellent meeting to illustrate why CWU forums are so valuable and why more people would benefit by attending. Included in this newsletter is a list of Volunteer Needs for WNPJ. Their website is [wnpj.org](http://wnpj.org) CWU—Madison is a member.

## **Ecumenical Choir**

Noon to 1:30 pm at Bethany Methodist Church, 3900 Mineral Point Road, Madison, 53705, in the 3rd floor Choir Room. Practice schedule: April 8, 22.

## **Board Meeting.**

Friday morning, April 22, 9:30am, at Bethany United Methodist Church, 3910 Mineral Point Road, Madison 53705.