



Church Women United in Madison, Wisconsin

C.W.U. Newsletter December, 2013 No. 5

Human Rights Celebration Through God Our Hands Can Protect

Friday, January 10, 2014

9:00 am Gathering and Coffee

9:30 am Welcome and announcements

10:00 am Program

Oakwood Village University Woods,
6209 Mineral Point Road, Madison,
in the Oaks Community Room

January Celebration of Human Rights

Our January meeting is a celebration of human rights. We will gather on Friday morning, January 10, 2014, for a program on Through God Our Hands Can Protect, a fitting piece of this year's theme of Church Women United, We are in God's Hands and We are God's Hands.

We will be meeting at Oakwood Village University Woods on Mineral Point Road. We will be gathering in the Community Room on the first floor of the Oaks building which is the last building on the right, the western edge of the campus.

Enter Oakwood Village from Mineral Point Road (opposite Island Drive). Turn right immediately. There is parking on the left and further along, on the right. There may be a few spaces up in the circle

between the Tower and The Oaks. If there is not sufficient parking you can go to the eastern side of the campus and find parking near the main entrance (Heritage Oaks.)

December Forum

More than 40 people came to the December meeting on Christmas, 50 years After the Washington March to hear the Rev. Andrew Davison, Pastor Emeritus of First Baptist Church, tell of his participation in that historic event, and about what compelled him to get on that bus in Providence, Rhode Island, with an assorted group of fellow townspeople to drive through the night to Washington, D.C. They arrived about 8:30 am, spent the day marching, listening, celebrating, honoring, and then getting back on the bus for another all-night trip home.

Andy began by giving thanks for the life of Nelson Mandela, led us in prayer, and then everyone sang a verse of We Shall Overcome. He opened his message by reading the poem, Christmas Returns, by the Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman, an assurance that life is good. Dr. Thurman was a classmate of Andy's father at Rochester in 1926. Andy had to be in Washington for this march as he remembered their thoughtful discussions, and Dr. Thurman's leadership in the Fellowship Church for All People. As he remembered when Mahalia Jackson was not welcomed by hotels when she visited the city, when he first saw signs in the south for water fountains labeled Whites Only and Colored Only. He personally encountered prejudice in 1946 when the Boston City Mission Society brought a group of young people from Harlem to Quincy Point for a joint program and people threw things at them for blocks as they walked to their meeting. He absolutely had to go to Washington for this march.

It was a dynamic and moving experience--Joan Baez singing, Peter of Peter, Paul and Mary singing, everyone singing. Looking back at this mountain top experience, as well as reflecting on what has come from that, on the gains we have made since then, the challenges we still face made for a dynamic and exciting morning. Andy ended with Dr. Thurman's poem, After Christmas. After Christmas, for us, the work of Christmas begins.

Comments and information in the discussion pointed up what we face. Jill Thomas cited figures concerning racial disparity in Dane County. In 2007, 20% of black people were unemployed, compared to 4% non-Hispanic white people. Now 25% of black people are unemployed, compared to 5% non-Hispanic white. In 2006, 46% of black children lived in poverty, compared to 6% non-Hispanic white. New figures have 75% of black children in poverty, compared to 5% non-Hispanic white. There are other gaps in community. Our dream is that we will find a way to bridge these gaps. And as Liz Gill remarked, "There would be no poverty if everyone shared."

This was a perfect lead-in to our January celebration of human rights, giving us much to remember and to think about. To begin our December meeting, Shirley Robbins presented the Church Women United Human Rights Award to Beverly Davison. We had honored Beverly before, with the Valiant Woman Award back in 1980. She has been a motivator, historian, preacher and leader with CWU who teaches wonderful Bible studies and inspires us. Beverly also happens to be Andy's wife, and they recently celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary.

Beverly thanked us for the award, and gladly accepts the role of motivator, but what is important to her is that she sees people who put into action what the Bible talks about. This unit worked hard to make human rights happen, rights for everyone, all over the world. On a separate page, you will find Bev's biography as submitted to national CWU for the award.

And thanks to the hospitality of First Baptist Church for a delicious beginning to our morning's fellowship, following which the Ecumenical Choir sang two numbers, Christmas Lullaby and Rise Up, Shepherd to lead into the morning's program.

Announcements From the Business Meeting Ecumenical Action

Gloria Carter noted three opportunities for action. Advocacy Call--December 13, Interfaith Call-In Day to prevent gun violence www.faithscalling.org 1-855-438-2982. Text "FaithsCalling" to 877-877 From CWU-- Dear Sisters:

It has been almost one year since twenty-six people—20 children and six adults—were shot and killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

Sadly, gun violence has continued to plague the country: more than 11,000 people have been shot and killed in America in the year since the Newtown tragedy. Yet we STILL don't have a federal law that requires background checks before most gun purchases.

Unfortunately, common-sense legislation that would immediately save lives by requiring universal background checks for gun sales has been blocked in the Senate by a handful of Senators.

So Church Women United is joining with the faithful across the country for Interfaith Call-In Day to End Gun Violence - Friday, December 13 - when we will call our Senators and urge them to pass common sense gun legislation.

What you can do on December 13th: Call your Senators at (202) 224-3121 and tell him or her to pass the bipartisan Manchin-Toomey compromise, which requires universal background checks for all gun purchases.

Here is an Action Alert reminder from Dec. 6 about the Interfaith Call-in Day to End Gun Violence on Friday, Dec. 13.

Here is how our Senators voted on the Manchin-Toomey background check bill in April 2013:

Sen. Johnson--Nay
phone number listed on website:
(202) 224-5323

Sen. Baldwin--Yea
phone number listed on website:
(202) 224-5653

It would be great if we could flood our senators with phone calls this Friday!--Gloria

Ecumenical Action

I'd like to share information from the November Advocacy Conference Call that Stephanie Jones, our CWU Advocacy Coordinator in Washington, organized. If you were at our December Celebration, you probably received a handout about it.

During the call, the participants discussed a number of issues that concern us as Church Women United: the ongoing sequester, the SNAP/Food Stamp program, Immigration Reform, Gun Violence Prevention, and other issues. The following is taken from Stephanie's overview of the discussion:

Sequester: We are still dealing with the Sequester, which began eight months ago and is wreaking havoc on our economy and our most vulnerable people. For example, one of the worst Sequester cuts took Head Start preschools and services away from 57,000 children. Sequestration also eliminated hundreds of thousands of jobs across the country.

There are four factors making next year's sequester impacts even more damaging than this year's.

1. The sequester makes larger cuts in 2014 than it did in 2013;
2. Many of the cuts that were legally made this year have not actually been implemented yet;
3. One-time fixes that mitigated sequestration's worst impacts in 2013 cannot be used again next year;
4. Sequestration made cuts to little-noticed but critical functions of government—cuts that will be particularly devastating if they are not reversed soon.

Three things we can do:

1. Contact your Member of Congress and urge him or her to repeal the sequester;
2. Advocate on the local level to inform your neighbors and friends about the sequester's detrimental impacts on communities;
3. Write letters to the editor and get on your local radio stations. Stephanie plans to send out a separate Alert with information about how to effectively communicate through letters to the editor and local radio.

SNAP (Food Stamp) Program

There has been a lot of misinformation spread surrounding the SNAP program. This is an area where we can be very effective on the local level by using facts to call into the local radio station and write letters to the editor. Pundits wishing to cut everything are generating many myths about SNAP and members of Congress are repeating this misinformation.

Immigration Reform

Speaker Boehner said that he doesn't think immigration reform will happen this year but is a definite possibility in 2014. House Republicans want a piecemeal overhaul, while we are advocating for a comprehensive approach as encompassed in the bill that passed the Senate last summer. President Obama said he would be open to separate pieces of legislation if all the pieces are put on his desk at once. Due to an upcoming election year, Republican members have a strong political incentive to work towards immigration reform next year.

CWU members can help educate people on immigration reform by telling them why it is important and why it needs to be a comprehensive approach. Stephanie's upcoming Alert on how to engage with local media will include tips on how to help tell these stories.

Gun Violence Prevention

Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence, of which CWU is a partner, is sponsoring an Interfaiths Call-in Day to Support Gun Violence Prevention on December 13. On that day, we will call our Senators to urge them to pass the compromise background check bill.

To participate and get more information (including a toolkit and suggested language), please go to www.faithscalling.org or call 1-855-438-2982. You can also text "FaithsCalling" to 877-877 for a reminder message.

Human Trafficking

During our call, we discussed local efforts to combat human trafficking and, among other things, suggested that you connect with other organizations involved in fighting human trafficking to learn what local law enforcement agencies are doing on the issue.

SlaveFree Madison will host a number of events in January, Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Watch for more information.

CWU Blog

CWU's blog is back up and running again! You can access our blog at [HYPERLINK "http://cwuinwashingtondc.wordpress.com"](http://cwuinwashingtondc.wordpress.com) <http://cwuinwashingtondc.wordpress.com>.

ARC Book Project

Audrey Hinger noted that for the ARC houses, we are "the church ladies" who bring gifts of books for the women of ARC houses and their children. These are women who are in recovery from addictions and have had contact with correctional facilities. We give 35 -40 new books a year, based on the requests of the women on what they would like for themselves and their children. We also give them record books for their babies. Many of the children have never owned a book before, much less a new book. Audrey described the joy she witnessed as each child claimed his own special selection. Audrey Hinger, Jacqueline Rodman, and a children's librarian spend many hours selecting appropriate titles. We are collecting money at each of our meetings to finance these special Christmas gifts.

To donate to purchase of these books, send a check made out to CWU, noting book project, to Marleen Lippert, 6329 Scandia Lane, McFarland, WI 53558

Fellowship of the Least Coin

Faith Bauman reported that ecumenical interfaith committee Fellowship of the Least Coin sent her a voluminous pamphlet on Messages and Reports 2013. Fifty-two pages, to be exact. They gave grants totaling \$120,000, many more African countries participated, and they had 60 requests for grants. They were able to support 37 projects, with money, leadership training, and project help. The committee that meets in New York has women from the Philippines, the U.S., Tonga, and Slovakia.

I found the ICFLC Budge--July 2012-June 3 2013 on page 46. Total budget in US dollars is \$444,945. Project Grants 2013, \$177,100. Block Grants, \$120,000.

Some 2011 project titles give a taste of the work they support. Project Empowering Women through Leadership Training, Kenya; Sensitization Workshops on Women's Act 2010, Gambia; Project Operating Millet Grinding Machine for Empowering Women, Burkina Paso; Project Applying religion to encourage recognizing similarities among difference, Bosnia; Project Ecumenical Theological Seminar on Genesis 1; Project Women Literacy, Togo

Take Joy!

I salute you. I am your friend and my love for you goes deep. There is nothing I can give you which you have not got. But there is much, very much, that while I cannot give it, you can take. No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in today. Take heaven! No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instance. Take peace! The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet within our reach, is joy. Take joy! Life is so full of meaning and purpose, so full of beauty . . . that you will find earth but cloaks your heaven. Courage then to claim it, that is all! . . . And so I greet you, with profound esteem and with the prayer that for you, now and forever, the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

"Letter to a Friend" by Fra Giovanni, 1513

That message echos through the centuries,
as strong as when angels sang,
shepherds rejoiced,
wise men journeyed,
and Mary and Joseph
welcomed its source,
newborn with promise.

Take joy!
Barbara Goodwyn Eggleston