

Church Women United in Madison, Wisconsin

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C.W.U. Newsletter December 2019 No. 13

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Human Rights Day Celebration

January 3, 2020

***Human Rights Day
Celebration***

Speaker: Frank Davis
Recipient of CWU Human Rights Award

9:00am Gathering and Coffee
9:30am Welcome and Announcements
9:45am Celebration: Human Rights Day

Men are Welcome

Bethany United Methodist Church
3910 Mineral Point Road, Madison

January Celebration

We will begin our CWU year at Bethany United Methodist Church celebrating human rights at 9 am on November 3, 2020.

Our speaker will be Frank Davis, recipient of our CWU Human Rights Award. Frank Davis was a community organizer for MOSES, a non-partisan interfaith organization that works to promote social justice with a focus on ending mass incarceration. As a formerly incarcerated individual, Mr. Davis is familiar with the challenges facing those returning to the community. He has used his experience to work for changes in the criminal justice system, including ending crimeless revocation and mass supervision, promoting alternatives to incarceration, and advocating for humane treatment of people in jail and prison.

MOSES is Madison Organizing in Strength, Equality, and Solidarity for Criminal Justice Reform. MOSES works to end racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system; promote alternatives to incarceration; advocate for the human treatment of people in jail and prison with timely release and without the use of solitary confinement; and end crimeless revocation, mass incarceration, and mass supervision.

MOSES strives to restore our community. The Madison area is being harmed by over-incarceration of its citizens. They are working to: restore families to wholeness (i.e. parents to their children); return men and women who do not need to be incarcerated back to the community; restore people to health through increased health and mental health programs; restore balance, fiscal discipline, and humane priorities to our criminal justice system.

This begins our new calendar year orientation and we will receive our new directories and schedules for the year.

Christmas Memories

We had a wonderful morning sharing Christmas memories and fellowship at our December gathering at First Baptist Church. About 25 people came, including Carol

Lange, President of CWU-Wisconsin, who drove in from Platteville to take part in the fun. Lynn McDonald greeted us and announced that she has retired as interim president of our unit, giving over to Gloria Carter, who told us about plans for the coming year. Our theme for the year will be Diversity and Inclusiveness. As part of this, we will have a book read. The book—*Nine African-American Women: Their Memories and Reflections*, authored by Madison Wisconsin African-American Genealogy Group. The Madison Public Library has copies. At our September 11 annual meeting, we will have a book discussion. At our October 2 forum, we will have a conversation with one of the writers, Pia M. Kinney James, who is the first black woman police officer.

For our *Christmas Memories*, decorations set the mood. Each table had a manger scene as a centerpiece. They came from Peru; Nepal; Israel; China; El Salvador; Assisi, Italy; and two from Germany. On the refreshment table, one German nativity was placed in an Advent wreath with a Christmas pyramid in the center. And a little tree had straw ornaments.

The refreshments included lots of traditional Christmas treats. Fruitcake, herring in wine sauce, Kringle, stollen, German gingerbread cookies, Danish cookies, fruit, and cheese. Drinks included eggnog.

So as we sat at our tables, we were primed to talk about Christmas memories. Some remembered when the candles on the Christmas tree were real, and someone was nearby with a bucket of water while they were lit. Trees went up much later in the early years of the century. The increasingly earlier advent of Christmas got much comment, and there was definitely nostalgia for times past. Customs and traditions got attention. Today's "jolly old elf", Santa Claus, is based on a real saint who lived in Turkey in the 4th century. Saint Nicholas was renowned for his generosity and love of children. According to historical sources, he would drop coins down the chimney to preserve his anonymity and the dignity of his recipients. In those days, stockings were hung by the chimney with care so they could dry out for

tomorrow's wearing. Clement Clark Moore gave us *The Night Before Christmas*, written for his children in 1822. It took some years to get published, but once it was, it was here to stay. Arthur Packham, an English illustrator, gave us the image of an elf. Thomas Nast, American illustrator and cartoonist, gave us our life-size Santa. Nast is also the one who made Republicans and Democrats elephants and donkeys.

Christmas as a celebration came when Christians in Rome decided to honor Christ's birth in December. Christ was born in the spring—shepherds in the field watching over their flocks by night would not be there in winter. The Romans were celebrating Saturnalia, a harvest festival in honor of Saturn, god of agriculture. Christmas trees go back to Egyptians decorating with palm fronds and Druids holding trees as sacred. Missionaries pointed to evergreens as symbols of Christ. Wreaths made of holly represented the crown of thorns, with leaves the thorns and berries drops of blood. Mistletoe was sacred to Druids, and kissing under the mistletoe goes back to a Norse fable. Frigga, goddess of love and beauty, shed tears to save her son Balder, and they became the white berries. Frigga promised to kiss anyone who passed under the mistletoe.

Christmas trees showed up with German immigrants in the 1800's. In Colonial Virginia, the pineapple was the symbol of hospitality.

Brenda Lempp shared her Christmases in Germany with us. Her husband is from Germany, and Stephen's mother sent figures for the manger scene to their children every year, and we got to see the completed set. They took their children there for Christmas several times. The Germans still use real candles, and so they were very careful with them. The trees were fairly open in space, so the problem wasn't fire, it was dripping wax. You have to protect the floor under the tree. An especially fond memory is of Three Kings Day, or Epiphany. In Germany, three men in king's hats show up to sing carols. Brenda, who was looking forward to it, missed them because she was out when they came. Her children surprised her by donning King's hats and showing up at the door with her own special serenade.

Jennifer Angelo told us about Christmas in New Zealand, where they lived for several years. As an experience, think Christmas in July. It is HOT then. The first year they were there, they did all the Christmas things they usually did, with turkey and all the trimmings, celebrating at home. The next year, they scrapped that, had barbecue, and went to the beach. They even learned to speak like natives around the barbie. Carolers did come to their door. It's a British tradition. The young men sang many songs, and Jennifer and family applauded when they were done. The carolers didn't leave, and then held out their hands, explaining that they were expecting to be paid. Barbara Eggleston told about a First Baptist Christmas presentation of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. The director wanted a live lamb, and thanks to a University professor, she got one four days old for the performance. Pinpoint breeding. The lamb was so tame by the night of the performance that they had to pinch it as they carried it up the center aisle of the sanctuary. The cast was composed entirely of children and young people.

Young people continued doing plays at Christmas, and one year the students were really worried about memorizing their lines. The answer to the problem—we'll do a radio play. You don't have to learn the lines, you read them from your script as you stand around the microphone. Added bonus, you don't need costumes. So, WFBC was the presentation that year.

Concluding our morning, the choir sang Christmas Lullaby and Whisper, Whisper, and concluded with a carol sing.

To all, MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONCERT OPPORTUNITY

Musicallee Yours presents the 10th Gospel Carols Concert Series, December 20th, Friday, 7 pm, at the Alliant Energy Center, Alliant Energy Way, Madison, WI 53713. For tickets and more information, visit GOSPELCAROLS.COM.

CWU—Madison

Our contact information has changed. Here are the new phone number and address for both CWU and MEC.

Phone: 608-347-4724

Address: P.O. Box 44814, Madison, WI 53744

Email address: cwumadison@gmail.com

Representative Sheila Stubb's Address at Church Women United-Madison's World Community Day 11/1/2019

Good morning everyone, thank you for being here! My name is Shelia Stubbs, and I represent the 77th Assembly District in the Wisconsin State Legislature.

I first want to give a warm thank you to all of the organizers for putting on this spectacular World Community Day. I also want to express my deep admiration of the inclusive work you all do here at Church Women United. I am honored to be your keynote speaker.

Every single day that I am in the State Legislature, I fight for you. I fight for access to safe and clean water; for comprehensive gun safety measures; and for equal pay for equal work — to name a few. I tackle these issues because I care about achieving justice for our community, our state, our country, and our world.

The theme of today's event is "The Time is Now - Resolve to Love." This is an objective that is both beautiful and significant. When we think about our Lord and Savior, we think about how He always did what was right by the people — and how everything He did, He made sure He did it with love. He showed unconditional compassion and care to all those around Him: to the people on the fringes of society, to the poor, to the criminals, and to the undesirable. He was fair, He was loving, and He was courageous. In the Book of Matthew, chapter 20, verses 30-34, the Scripture tells us:

“Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!’ The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, ‘Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!’ Jesus stopped and called them. ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ he asked. ‘Lord,’ they answered, ‘we want our sight.’ Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.”

Jesus did not discriminate. He treated even those others considered to be “social outcasts” as people who deserved respect, dignity, and kindness. This lesson from our Savior is one that we must carry with us every day, every hour, every minute. While we will never be perfect, as long as we have love in our hearts like He did, we will be favored. For the Word of God tells us:

“Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.” The Book of Romans, chapter 13, verse 8.

When I go into the Capitol Building to work for my constituents, I always aim to follow in His example of compassion, in His example of love, and in His example of equity. No matter the identities, personalities, or characteristics of my constituents, I fight for them and their rights just as hard as I would fight for my own. At the end of the day, this is what public service is all about. I chose this profession because I care about people more than I care about a paycheck. I care about advancing important causes, providing equal access to justice, and working to affect societal change. These are the values and goals I hold with me every day, but it is because of my love and compassion that I am able to achieve anything. And it is because of your love and compassion that you are able to achieve *your* goals and live out *your* values.

We are living in unsettling times right now. We live in a world where nearly half of our population, over 3 billion people, live in crippling poverty. We live in a nation where black children, men, and women are three times more likely to be killed by police than white people — even though black people only make-up about 14% of our country’s population. We live in a state where black people are incarcerated 12 to one when compared to white people, which is over double the national average. And we live in a city where the population has increased by over 100,000 people since 2000, resulting in

a rapid rise in the cost of living, unaffordable housing, and lack of access to reliable transportation — leaving our people more likely to live in poverty, be unemployed, and in too many cases be homeless. These examples are not the product of a loving and compassionate world. They are the products of a society that desperately needs change and action.

Those of us here in this room today cannot and will not change everything. In fact, we won't change most things. But we can change some — we can change discriminatory school board policies, we can change the culture of our work environment, we can change the harmful mindset of a friend, and we can change the day of a complete stranger. We are powerful and we are capable. When we resolve to love, we make the kind of change that we dream of possible — and we get closer to making it a reality. The time is *truly* now.

In the words of our former President Barack Obama, “Change will not come if we wait for some other person or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS & DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS FORM
FOR CHURCH WOMEN UNITED OF MADISON

Please Note: These contributions will be used for the general operating expenses of CWU of Madison, as well as for the Celebration materials, choir music, annual donations to selected community social services, and annual contribution to Church Women United of Wisconsin. GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES include, in part, the office rent, and the cost of producing and mailing the CWU newsletter, and miscellaneous supplies needed throughout the year.

Please send in contributions by November 30 of each year. Our financial year ends on December 31 of each year.

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Please make your check(s) payable to: Church Women of Madison and send to:

Marleen S. Lippert, Treasurer

CWU of Madison

6329 Scandia Lane
McFarland, WI 53558

Thank you for your financial assistance in carrying out the various projects of CWU. Your contributions are sincerely appreciated.

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