



# Church Women United in Madison, Wisconsin

C.W.U. Newsletter February, 2014 No. 7

## World Day of Prayer Celebration

Friday, March 7, 2014

### Streams in the Desert

#### Worship Service written by WDP of Egypt

9:00 am Gathering and Coffee

9:30 am Welcome and announcements

10:00 am Program

Faith Community Baptist Church  
605 Spruce Street, Madison, WI 53715

### World Day of Prayer *Streams in the Desert*

Join us on March 7 for the 2014 worship celebration written by WDP Egypt. We will gather at Faith Community Baptist Church, 605 Spruce Street, at 9 am for conversation and coffee, followed by welcome and announcements, with the worship service to begin at 10 am.

Egypt: A place where history flows across every location like the Nile River flows through its land. A place where history speaks to us calling us to remember our past. Egypt has been both a place of exile and a place of refuge. It is a place where streams flow through desert lands bringing with them the fertile nutrients needed for plants, trees, and all forms of life to flourish. However these streams are not only the physical rivers that we can dip our feet into. In the 2014 service we are invited to seek the streams of living water which Jesus offers.

We come to sit by a well in Samaria where a woman will meet Jesus and, in meeting him, will meet God. It was at this well that she was offered the life giving waters that became “in her a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” It is in her meeting that we too are offered this living water. Come, let us dive into those waters and see what may come of our encounter

We are invited to think about our own lives and where we recognize streams in our own deserts; places and moments where God is actively at work. To reflect on times when we, like the Samaritan woman, have gone to the well looking for one thing and then discovered Christ offering us what we never expected. We will come not only to learn what this spring of living water is, but how we can, like the Samaritan woman, carry it back to our communities. To see the transformation that can happen when we share our stories of encountering the living God. So come, drink your fill of the waters that God has to offer.

### February Forum

Over 30 people attended our forum, *Stories from the Holy Land Today*, at Memorial UCC in Fitchburg. Our hosts and CWU key women provided a welcoming light breakfast, announcements brought us up to date on ecumenical action, and then Bonnie Overbeke gave us an informative and extensive look at the Holy Land today, beginning with her first visit in 2001 up to her most recent trip last summer as part of a delegation from Memorial UCC. Memorial has a supportive relationship with Christmas Lutheran Church of Bethlehem, an Arab Christian congregation that is supporting education and ecumenical action there in the West Bank. The delegation’s focus has been on understanding and assisting with the health, educational, and spiritual development of the Christian community in Israel. They are also con-

cerned with the well-being of the people there of every faith, and on political aspects of conditions in Israel.

2001 was an uneasy time in the mid-east. The conflict between Palestine and Israel, the second intifada. Bonnie promised her family that she would avoid dangerous sites and concentrate on the holy sites of the Holy Land. She soon discovered that there is no avoiding controversial sites, because they include the holy sites, and the threads of religion and politics entwine and mesh with each other. She was staying at an ecumenical institute, where you walk into the front door in Israel and go out the back door into Bethlehem which is the West Bank. The holy sites do not exist in a vacuum.

Bonnie gave us a wonderful look at temples, mosques, churches, landscapes, and appreciation of how the three Abrahamic religions live cheek by jowl in this troubled area. Maps that showed the diminishing areas of Palestine, views of Palestinian villages cut off from their fields, walls separating, blocking, restricting. Jerusalem's Temple Mount, crowned by a gigantic mosque, with only the western wall of the second temple left for Jews--the Wailing Wall, where they come to pray.

We experienced the beauty of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan, the area where Jesus conducted his ministry. We met men and women who are working for recognition, reconciliation, and peace. Christian peacemaker teams, teachers, farmers--people are working to solve problems, though the road is difficult.

We came away with a greater appreciation of the trials and traumas of Palestine, the shrinking space, the loss of connections. Palestine is Arab, but that does not equate with Muslim. Palestinian Christians are a significant part of the population. Working for peace, for recognition, for education for orphaned children, for protection of religious sites and institutions--there is so much to learn, to understand, to call for concern and prayer. But we also received a message of hope. God is at work here. On the Palestine side of the wall is the message--Hope, Love Wins.

## Ecumenical Action

On February 1 Susan Becker and I attended the Fourth Annual SlaveFree Madison Film Festival. The theme this year was "U.S. Teens and Trafficking." We viewed three films, all of which were followed by discussions highlighting the local context for human trafficking. I would like to share information about local organizations that are working on issues related to human trafficking.

Project RESPECT has been working since 1981 to empower survivors of human trafficking, both sex and labor trafficking. They provide advocacy, case management, counseling, crisis intervention, peer support services, and alternative to incarceration services. Project RESPECT also provides training to law enforcement, service providers and community based organizations to improve systems response for victims. They work with the community to identify and respond to sexual exploitation in Dane County. You can contact Project RESPECT at 608-283-6435.

Make Room for Youth (MRFY) was founded in 2010 by a small group of citizens determined to ensure that safe places to stay are available to all youth in Dane County. Unaccompanied homeless youth exist in every county of the United States, including Dane County. Youth living on the street are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked. Up until now there has been no youth shelter in Dane County, but Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin/Briarpatch is completing a new temporary shelter with 8 beds for youth aged 13-17. Although the facility is nearly complete, funds for operating costs need to be secured.

MRFY has a list of hopes and needs that include cash donations for emergency needs and on-going support and donations of items, such as food/grocery cards, gas cards, bus passes, undergarments, person hygiene items, hand/foot warmers, waterproof warm gloves, sleeping bags, individual-sized blankets, sturdy new backpacks, thick zippered hoodie sweat shirts, small flashlights & batteries, and protein bars. For current or emergent needs, email HYPERLINK "<mailto:mrfydane@gmail.com>" [mrfydane@gmail.com](mailto:mrfydane@gmail.com) or call 608-535-9940. Other actions you can take:

- Volunteer to become a host home provider for teens—contact Ann Bohlman at Youth Services at 608-245-2550, ext. 113. Or contact Casey Behrend at Youth Services at 608-245-2550, ext. 212, for all other volunteer questions.
- Start a teen clothes closet in your area.
- Write letters to newspapers, alders, county board supervisors, and state and federal legislators. Contact MRFY for current issues, concerns, and sample letters.

Contact information for MRFY: email- HYPERLINK "<mailto:MRFYdane@gmail.com>" [MRFYdane@gmail.com](mailto:MRFYdane@gmail.com), phone- 608-35-9940, website: HYPERLINK "<http://www.MRFY.org>" [www.MRFY.org](http://www.MRFY.org). You can also find MRFY on Facebook: Make Room For Youth (MRFY).

Farm laborers can be victims of trafficking and slave labor. Family Farm Defenders, a non-profit organization incorporated in 1994, seeks to “create a farmer-controlled and consumer-oriented food and fiber system, based upon democratically controlled institutions that empower farmers to speak for and respect themselves in their quest for social and economic justice.” They support sustainable agriculture, farm worker rights, animal welfare, consumer safety, fair trade, and food sovereignty. More information is at HYPERLINK "<http://www.familyfarmdefenders.org>" [www.familyfarmdefenders.org](http://www.familyfarmdefenders.org).

Is your church engaging in the issue of human trafficking, through studying the issue, raising awareness, advocating or taking other forms of action? Church Women United is working with Slave-Free Madison to organize a possible potluck and discussion for a visiting church group in mid-May. We’d like to find churches that have been or are becoming involved in the issue and would like to share experiences and ideas at the potluck discussion. Please contact me (Gloria Carter) by phone at 608-849-7589 or by email: HYPERLINK "<mailto:carter53597@tds.net>" [carter53597@tds.net](mailto:carter53597@tds.net). Thanks!

## News From the Wisconsin Council of Churches

The Wisconsin Council of Churches is proud to be a co-sponsor of the White Privilege Conference (WPC) this year in Madison March 26-29, a national gathering which examines the challenging concepts of privilege and oppression and offers solutions and team building strategies to work toward a more equitable world. The WPC attracts students, professionals, activists, parents, community leaders and members with diverse perspectives. WPC welcomes folks with varying levels of experience addressing issues of diversity, cultural competence and multiculturalism.

Find more information at HYPERLINK "<http://www.whiteprivilegeconference.com/>" [www.whiteprivilegeconference.com](http://www.whiteprivilegeconference.com/) The registration fee is \$365. Individuals who are employed by non-profits like churches get the deeply discounted rate of \$230. An additional discount of 10-20% is available by registering through the Wisconsin Council of Churches. Registration does not include housing and meals in Madison. Interested individuals should email Scott Anderson at HYPERLINK "<mailto:sanderson@wichurches.org>" [sanderson@wichurches.org](mailto:sanderson@wichurches.org) indicating an intent to register no later than Feb. 14 to take advantage of Council’s discount.

*Gloria Carter*, Ecumenical Action Chair 608-849-7589 [carter53597@tds.net](mailto:carter53597@tds.net)

## Handouts at our Forum

End Trafficking, a UNICEF sheet that defines what that means, how pervasive it is, and suggests what you can do about it.

Project Respect: Organizing for change. Working with the community to identify and respond to sexual exploitation in Dane County.

Make Room for Youth. Information Sheet.MRFY.org

Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin, Inc.

Family Farm Defenders [familyfarmdefenders.org](http://familyfarmdefenders.org)

Bright Stars of Bethlehem. Organization dedicated to helping people in the Holy Land have live and have it abundantly. [brightstarsbethlehem.org](http://brightstarsbethlehem.org)

## **Devotion**

At the January CWU-Madison board meeting, Shirley Robbins gave the following devotion. Board members requested that we share it in our newsletter.

A thoughtful silence  
Envelops gathered women  
As God breathes softly.  
*Barbara Goodwyn Eggleston*

Our Father, We think of all the pain and heartache,  
the tears and sorrow,  
the greed and cruelty unloosed around the world.  
Help us to be instruments of thine  
to alleviate the pain by this day:  
    Returning good for evil,  
    Returning soft answers for sharp criticisms,  
    Being polite when we receive rudeness,  
    Being understanding when we are confronted  
        by ignorance and stupidity.  
So may we, in gentleness and love,  
Check the hasty answer,  
Choke back the unkind retort,  
And thus short-circuit some of the bitterness and  
unkindness that has overflowed thy world.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus,  
Who alone can give us the grace so to act.  
Amen.

---Peter Marshall