



Church Women United in Madison, Wisconsin

www.churchwomenunited-madison.net

C.W.U. Newsletter February, 2016 No. 7

Friday, March 4, 2016

*World Day of Prayer Celebration:
Receive Children, Receive Me*
2016 World Day of Prayer
Written by the Women of Cuba

9:00 am Gathering and Coffee
9:30 am Welcome and Announcements
10:00 Celebration

Mount Zion Baptist Church,
2019 Fisher Street, Madison

March Celebration: World Day of Prayer

Receive Children, Receive Me is the focus of our celebration of World Day of Prayer at Mount Zion Baptist Church, 2019 Fisher Street, on Friday, March 4, 2016. Come for fellowship at 9:00 am, announcements and business at 9:30, and the celebration at 10. This celebration was prepared by the World Day of Prayer Committee of Cuba and the World Day of Prayer USA Committee. It is a program the people all over the world will celebrate together. Scripture focus is Mark 10:13-16.

We will also present our CWU Human Rights Award to Emily Auerbach for her superb Odyssey Project. This was scheduled for February, but a mixup of dates (days, really) had Emily coming to our February forum on Saturday, March 5. Luckily, we caught the miscommunication before she could go to St. Paul's on Saturday, though too late to get her there for Friday's program.

Do mark your calendars for Friday, March 4, for this celebration, with the extra value of celebrating a Madison program that addresses concerns for children and education with positive outcomes for its participants.

February Forum

Our February program on Conversations About Racial Justice proved to be a nourishing time of sharing and focus on a topic that is especially prominent in news both locally and nationally. The Rev. Joseph B. Baring brought his wealth of experience and service to share with a group of diverse and interested participants. Working with Gloria Carter, he handed out two sheets, a Racial Inventory, and Race for Results: The Data. These come from sessions and workshops of the Peace and Justice Commission of the Wisconsin Council of Churches, of which he and Gloria are members. Gloria represents state CWU on this Commission. The commission is working on a four-session Racial Equity Study Guide that will be available to congregations soon on the Wisconsin Council of Churches website (wichurches.org).

The handouts helped us to focus as we explored what racial justice is and how it affects our lives individually and together. The Racial Inventory asks you as an individual to rate whether the statement is always true for you, sometimes true for you, or seldom true for you.

Because of my race or color —

—I can be in the company of people of my race most of the time.

—If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or —purchasing housing in an area in which I would want to live and which I can afford.

—I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

There were 23 such questions.

The Race for Results: the Data gave a review of and reflection on data in Wisconsin. For example, 49.9% of African Americans will not graduate high school on time. Topics for discussion include the definition of racism, how it affects organization diversity, lists of contemporary authors for a class. Examples of actions that raise the questions: Intentional or unintentional racism? Overt or covert racism? Privilege and power?

Rev. Baring brought all this home with strong evidence based on his life experiences and his increased understanding. A major point: it is not equality that we need. It is equity. A level playing field is not an equitable playing field. The Race to Equity report that came out showed that Wisconsin is worse than Mississippi in every level. Taking a wide-ranging perspective, our nation's founding statement of "We the people, in order to form a more perfect union . . ." That "We" did not include women, poor, colored. That We was white wealthy male landowners. Women fight for their rights. Many children have no advocates for them. Native American, African American, laws marginalize people of color. As culture changes, we stereotype people. And it's not just white people who do that. African Americans do it too. A group of young AA men were guys, now we perceive them as gangs. We spend more time on the mistreatment of animals than on people. The war on drugs is one of the worst things we've done. White men with cocaine do less time than black men with crack. Increased prison population is expensive and does nothing to solve addiction problems. We blockaded Cuba, stopped missiles, but we can't stop drugs. If we could stop drugs, we could eliminate prisons.

Third grade reading scores are what we've used to build prisons. Childhood development starts in the womb. We have to start before third grade to make a difference.

Think about it. The most segregated time of the week is Sunday. Madison does not have a ghetto. Milwaukee does. We have a reputation as a college

town, enlightened, but we still have separation, segregation. We need to remember—united we stand. People not of color too often keep separation. When people get together, they lift up differences rather than similarities. We should focus on Amos 5:24, let justice rage like a river. We need to change our mindset. Racial justice is important. Peace and justice go hand in hand. Embracing our differences enriches us.

This rough sketch gives only a hint of the value that we took from Friday's meeting. Some 40 people stayed past noon to be a part of this program. At the end, Rev. Baring shared a litany by Bishop Adam J. Richardson Jr. that calls for action that must follow the prayer meeting. Vigilance follows the Vigil. Action is necessary to change things. (Note: The African Methodist Church, founded in 1787 and incorporated in 1816, requires its bishop to spend 4 years in Africa. The AME church is a world-wide denomination.)

Mea Culpa from Marleen Lippert

My apologies to CWU for the confusion about the Human Rights Award presentation. When Prof. Auerbach could not come to the January Human Rights Celebration on Saturday, January 9, Marleen offered February's meeting and she accepted. Unfortunately, Emily thought it was a Saturday meeting, and so she had it on her calendar for February 6. Luckily, Marleen was able to reach her in time to prevent her from showing up at St. Paul's on Saturday. As it turns out, Emily is as excited about the focus on children in March as she was about the racial justice focus in February. And many of her students are members of Mount Zion, which makes it doubly special. So it is working out nicely after all.

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: February 12, 26; March 11; April 8, 22. Board Meeting. Friday morning, February 26, 9:30am, at Bethany United Methodist Church, 3910 Mineral Point Road, Madison 53705.