



Church Women United in Madison, Wisconsin

www.churchwomenunited-madison.net

C.W.U. Newsletter January, 2016 No. 6

February Forum
Friday, February 5, 2016

*Conversations About
Racial Justice*

Rev. Joseph B. Baring, Sr.

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

St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church
4525 Diamond Drive, Madison

February Forum

The Rev. Joseph B. Baring, Sr. will lead us in *Conversations About Racial Justice* on Friday morning, February 5, 2016, at his church, St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church, 4525 Diamond Drive, Madison. Come join us for a timely look at this vital issue facing all of us as we move into this new year.

In addition, we will be presenting the CWU Human Rights Award to Emily Auerbach for her superb Odyssey Project.

Emily Auerbach is a Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Director of the UW Odyssey Project (www.odyssey.wisc.edu), a free college jumpstart course for adults at the poverty level. She has received numerous campus, state, and national awards for teaching, broadcasting, diversity programming, and humanitarian efforts. The author of the acclaimed *Searching for Jane Austen*, Emily Auerbach also reaches hundreds of thousands of adults through her programs on Wisconsin Public Radio, her book groups at libraries, and her humanities programming for those in retirement centers, prisons, and service clubs.

St. Paul's is accessible to all, with no steps involved in entering the building or sanctuary. The 9 am gathering will be at the lower level, and there is no elevator, but everyone will be upstairs by 10 am.

January Forum

Yes, January Forum. After the newsletter went out, the program changed completely, and we were fortunate to get Florence Chenoweth to speak about the rebuilding of her home country, Liberia, after devastating years of war, recovery, and then devastating Ebola crisis.

Florence Chenoweth came to Wisconsin to study at UW-Madison. Her interest in agriculture as a response to human hunger was sparked by a presentation at her school when she was 17 years old.

She has used her education both to advance work here and to help Liberia. She has served as Secretary of Agriculture for 3 different terms in Liberia.

When she was a child, her father urged all his children to read and know the constitution of Liberia. She was a constitutional scholar at age 12, knew that women's rights were a part of that document, and when she decided to pursue education in agriculture, this came in handy. The college of agriculture was 17 miles from the city with the main campus, and it was all male in faculty and students, so they refused to admit her. She prepared to sue the country, but thanks to presidential intervention, they admitted her and bussed her to campus every day for 4 years.

Florence got comfortable in Wisconsin, doing work toward her goal of alleviating hunger and supporting women in the world's economy. Liberia experienced 24 1/2 years of internal war, and this left the country devastated. She decided to return to Liberia to help her country recover. The country had no electricity, no roads, no infrastructure. Women bonded together, worked with neighboring countries, fought to attend the peace accords in Ghana. When Ellen Johnson became president, she asked women what they wanted. Education was their answer. They instituted a fast-track system for illiterate adults that met in the evening and was free. Women took advantage of it.

Agriculture was drudgery for women. In 2009, recognizing the lack of capacity for dealing with this, they began a 10 year training program to rebuild personnel

in agriculture. This was on fast track for the first 6 years. The first gift they received to support this effort was \$2.1 million from the US. They sent people to colleges in Africa, India, developing people at MA and PHD levels. Worked with the European Union on local training.

They worked to rebuild Liberia, rebuild markets working with women. No electricity, but all the women had cell phones, cheap solar models from China. They can send money by phone, and they stopped paper checks. Money goes into their accounts electronically.

Making great progress with 9.2% economic growth in 2013, in December, Ebola struck. Ebola comes to kill, kills quickly. Liberia was the worst hit, with women bearing the brunt of 5000 deaths. People were dying in the streets. Thanks to the leadership of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, they met the challenge of finding ways to incinerate bodies, deal with the crisis. Agriculture had a network, and this plays an important role in rebuilding again.

Throughout, the churches of Liberia have played a major role. Methodist, Baptist, have all helped rebuild. The United States gave so much aid. Now at least 15 counties have at least an AA level of schooling, and 6 have full colleges.

This was a fascinating look at both Liberia and Florence's life. You can increase your knowledge of Liberia by reading *This Child Shall Be Great*, by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, published by Harper Perennial books. This autobiography should be fascinating reading. And Ellen Johnson also came to Wisconsin to attend UW-Madison.

(Florence says that whatever country she goes to, she finds Badger alumni groups.)

Ecumenical Choir

We meet at noon until 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, January 22, 9:30am, at Bethany United Methodist Church, 3910 Mineral Point Road, Madison 53705.

A Faith Response to Sex Trafficking

A Faith Response to Sex Trafficking, Sunday, January 24, 2016, 2 to 4 p.m. (with an additional hour, 4-5 p.m.), Fitchburg Library, 5530 Lacy Road. "You may choose to look the other way, but you can never again say that you did not know"

The Faith Response Committee of SlaveFree Madison would like to update you on the event to raise our community's awareness and pursue ways that we can fight against the terrible crime of human trafficking. We hope that you and others from your faith community will join us at a public meeting about the rise of sex trafficking in the country, and specifically in our area. The schedule for this event will include a 5 member panel of local experts who have experience working with at-risk and/or sexually abused youth, addressing the problem from a variety of disciplines and perspectives. Our panel members will include the following:

Dr. Molly Kane, physician
Amy Noble, public school social worker
Tyler Schueffner, outreach worker to homeless youth, Briarpatch
State Rep. LaTonya Johnson, co-sponsor of Safe Harbor bill
Roger Baker, police officer with Madison PD

The two hours will include learning about the dangers and realities of human trafficking in our community and hearing from experts who work on a daily basis to help eradicate this problem. We will have the opportunity to ask questions and consider the specific actions our faith communities can take now to combat human trafficking. For those who wish to stay, there will be an additional hour to view three short (5-20 min.) documentaries and/or continue discussion.

At this event, we hope to enlist clergy, youth leaders, board chairs, lay leaders and others interested in taking part and implementing real solutions. It is our hope that there are those in your organization/faith community who will consider joining us. **MADISON'S FAITH COMMUNITIES SAY NO TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING!** Please don't look the other way. Say yes and join us on January 24.

Thank you,
SlaveFree Madison Faith Response committee members, Mary Fiore, Marge Hamann, Sally Jones, Corliss Karasov and Jen Kooistra

Although we don't require an RSVP, it would be helpful in planning space and refreshments. For questions, or responses, please contact Mary Fiore, fior@charter.net, 608-609-1844