



# Church Women United in Madison, Wisconsin

[www.churchwomenunited-madison.net](http://www.churchwomenunited-madison.net)

C.W.U. Newsletter January, 2018 No. 6

## Interfaith Day at Holy Wisdom Monastery Friday, February 2, 2018

9:00 am Gathering & Coffee  
9:30 am Welcome & Announcements  
10:00 am Interfaith Day Program

Holy Wisdom Monastery  
4200 County Trunk M, Middleton

### February Forum

On Friday, February 2, our forum will meet at the Holy Wisdom Monastery located at 4200 County Trunk M, Middleton. It is a showplace of environmental achievement. This will be an interfaith time, learning about other religions in the world. Christian Scientists and Muslims will join us. Speakers have not all been confirmed yet, but there will be a good variety. We will gather at 9:00 a.m. for coffee. The program is scheduled for 10:00 a.m.

Betsy Ernst-Mullin has offered to drive 3 women there in her car. Call her if you would like a ride. Her number is 608-206-6550.

### Human Rights Day Celebration

Even though it was a bitterly cold day, at least 23 people came to Monona UMC for our human rights day celebration. We enjoyed a delicious and bountiful brunch, with breakfast casserole, sausages, deviled eggs, and multiple sweet offerings, including gluten free.

Jeanette Williams welcomed us to their church. A Marshal Erdman design, with Sunday School rooms on the ground floor using dividers and the sanctuary upstairs. When adding an elevator came up, they said "No" and moved the sanctuary instead. The

sanctuary is now at ground level, with a lovely slanted sky light over the altar area. The SS rooms are now upstairs, and each has a room with a window and door, much more conducive to teaching and discussions. We moved to the sanctuary for a particularly meaningful celebration.

Our theme: "The spirit of the celebration is for all participants to understand the meaning of unity. It is our unity that makes the world whole. As we come together for our celebrations, let us come together forever. Let us create solidarity in the world that reflects God's creation. In everything that God created God said, 'It was good'. While God gave human beings dominion over the land and that is in it, God made all the creatures to live in unity. This is the world the Lord created. Let us 'Reach for Wholeness' and unity 'in solidarity with God's Creation' as we celebrate Human Rights."

Women from First Methodist UMC presented our program, "We greet you on this glorious day that we have been blessed to witness. God is so gracious unto us. We welcome you to this Human Rights Celebration 2018 in which we focus on Reaching for Wholeness in Solidarity with God's Creation. We are charged to love one another as we love ourselves. We are charged to join together in unity as sisters in the Creation; we are charged to defend the weak and the fatherless, to do justice unto the oppressed. May our hearts and minds be cleared and opened to heed the call of God as we participate in this Human Rights Celebration."

Prayer opened our worship. "Friend, do it this way; do the very best you can with both your heart and mind. And if you do it that way, the power of the universe will come to your assistance, if your heart and mind are in unity. When one sits in the hope of the people, one must be responsible because all of creation is related. And the hurt of one is the hurt of all. And the honor of one is the honor of all. And whatever we do affects everything in the universe." Lokota Prayer

Our scripture was 1 Corinthians 1:10. “I beg you, sisters and brothers, by the name of Our Lord that all of you agree with each other and not be divided into groups . . . be completely joined together by having the same purpose.”

In response, “. . . the true measure of our commitment to justice, the character of our society, or commitment to the rule of law, fairness, and equality cannot be measured by how we treat the rich, the powerful, the privileged, and the respected among us. The truest measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned.

—Brian Stephenson, author *Just Mercy*.

Our calls to prayer: We pray for our openness, acceptance and tolerance of those who may appear different than ourselves.

We pray that we will be more inclusive and let our love of God shine in our actions daily.

We pray that each of us will increase the peace in our hearts and that we will share that peace with each person we meet.

Lord, let peace and justice run down like rivers. We are more alike that we are different.

We lit a candle for justice, a candle for hope, a candle for peace, and an Epiphany candle.

We also recognized that the United Nations issued a declaration of human rights in 1948, recognizing the dignity and worth of every individual. Human Rights Day is celebrated on December 10.

We gave the Human Rights Award to Abbi Kruse, the director of The Playing Field, an early education program housed at Bethany Methodist Church.

Over the last 25 years, Abbi Kruse has served in a wide variety of early education programs. Her roles included teacher, instructional coach, professional development director, and administrator.

In 2015, she founded The Playing Field aimed at minimizing the disparity that exists in Madison between white and minority children. It is her belief that all children deserve access to the highest quality of early care and education.

The Playing Field serves children experiencing homelessness right alongside those from far more advantaged families. The program intentionally ad-

resses the barriers children from low income homes face in accessing high quality early education. A grant from Early Head Start funds children experiencing homelessness and provides transportation. The school raises scholarships so no low income family is asked to pay fees.

Abbi has asked that her staff share this recognition. She stated, “The teachers are really the ones impacting our children. When a child needs a bath or clean clothes, the staff bathe them and launder their clothes. The staff love and welcome all children—even those with very challenging behaviors.”

With the understanding that early trauma impacts the developing brain, staff at The Playing Field provide a safe, nurturing space for children. The best buffer against adverse childhood experiences is secure emotional attachment and the caring staff are committed to building these strong bonds.

Abbi was unable to attend, but she sent her daughter to represent her and read Abbi’s message to us.

*The Playing Field came from my desire to see children educated in the context of our community- rather than in groups segregated by race or socio-economic status. We opened in September of 2015 with a license to care for 22 children. In 2016, we increased our capacity to 40 and in 2017, we opened the last classroom and expanded to 52 children.*

*Since we began, we have been overwhelmed by the number of babies and young children who have already experienced so much adversity. These early life challenges impacting children in our community include placement in foster care, domestic violence or substance abuse in the home, loss of parents through death or incarceration, homelessness and more.*

*To be honest, it can sometimes feel like the issues are too big and our ability to help is too small. However, when I consider the options, I know this- we can do something or we can do nothing. At The Playing Field, we choose to do something!*

*We know that strong emotional attachments are the key to building resiliency in children and helping them to rise above adversity. Our staff work tirelessly to build these bonds with children. Our program model has been intentionally designed to support these early and important relationships.*

*Each day, our bus travels the city, picking up and*

*dropping children from homes, apartments, hotels, shelters and even cars. From the moment children step onto the bus, our staff is communicating to them - you are safe and you are loved.*

*We have remodeled our facilities so that if children arrive in need of clean clothing and/or a bath, we can provide for those needs.*

*We serve two meals and a snack each day with some of the food coming from our own gardens.*

*We provide a high quality, early education experience that any parent would choose for their child and we make that care accessible to children from a wide range of backgrounds.*

*The staff of The Playing Field are the heart of all we do. For that reason, I have asked that this award be shared with them. Each of them has accepted a very challenging role- one that will likely never lead to either fame or fortune- but one that is extremely important to children, their families, and our community.*

*Thank you for recognizing our staff and for your ongoing interest in our work.  
Wishing you well,     Abbi Kruse*

Our thanks to Emily Ford, Diane Scorgi, and Donna Veatch of First Methodist and Meg Nielsen of Triangle Ministry for presenting this exceptional service, and to Donna Beech for providing music, both piano and vocal. Her song choices focused on Epiphany: "I heard there was a baby boy," "In the middle of the forest, there's a clearing by a stream, . . . baby dreaming."

This worship service was one of the most meaningful CWU celebrations we have had, and why this newsletter is longer than usual so that we can share it with all our members.

## **Announcements**

Meg Nielsen announced that Triangle Ministry is starting Monday meals, beginning January 15. These will be served by different groups, who will bring food, serve, and clean up afterwards. Groups interested in taking part should contact Triangle Ministry. There is lots of food insecurity. They have a food pantry on first Wednesdays. Again, donations welcome. This year is the 40th anniversary of Triangle Ministry. Their web site is [www.triangleministry.com](http://www.triangleministry.com) Meg's email address is [churchladymeg@hotmail.com](mailto:churchladymeg@hotmail.com)

## **Another Opportunity**

Emily VanZandt Ford invited us to an interfaith brunch on Saturday, January 27, from 9 to Noon. "Two Branches of a Family Tree: Islam and Christianity", an event for women, will be in Fellowship Hall, First United Methodist Church, 203 Wisconsin Ave, Madison, WI 53703. . This is a women only event! The program will be a panel consisting of 3 Muslim women from the local area, an Arabic history professor who is an American convert to Islam, a doctoral student in Pharmacy from Egypt, and a graduate student in social work from Bangladesh. The Raging Grannies will also be singing.

We will have a catered brunch. The cost for the program and brunch is \$10. It will include both vegetarian and gluten-free options. Reservations need to be made by January 21 - Women may contact me at 608-226-8958 or [emford2@att.net](mailto:emford2@att.net) Money should be sent to me at 1214 Alexandria Lane, Madison, 53718. Make checks payable to United Methodist Women, FUMC. All proceeds from the brunch will go to Open Doors for Refugees. Poster included if you wish to post it.

## **CWU-Madison Board**

January 26, 2018, Friday morning, 9:30 am, Bethany UMC, 3910 Mineral Point Road, Madison, coffee/fellowship at 9 am.

# 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, insurance, bulk mail permit and the cost of producing and mailing the CWU newsletter, and miscellaneous supplies need 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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Thank you for your financial assistance in carrying out the various projects of CWU.  
Your contributions are sincerely appreciated.

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