



# Church Women United in Madison, Wisconsin

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

C.W.U. Newsletter May, 2017 No. 9

## May 19, 2017 CWU Program Planning Meeting

9:00 am Gathering and Coffee  
9:30 am Board Meeting  
10:15 am Planning Meeting

Bethany United Methodist Church, 3910 Mineral Point Road, Madison 537705

### **CWU Madison Board Meeting and Planning Meeting**

On May 19 we will gather to plan our 2017-2018 Forum schedule. ALL CWU members are invited to help plan the programs and places for our forums. The Board meets at 9:30, with planning meeting beginning at 10:15. You are welcome to attend the board meeting as well.

### **May Friendship Day**

Kindling New Fires of Love provided a meaningful program focusing on the social needs of children.

The introduction provided for our celebration explains a lot about CWU: May Friendship Day began in May 1933 when two women's groups, meeting at separate luncheons, focused on children's health and the children of migrant families. The first luncheon was held by the Women's Council for Home Missions in New York City. The second, called "Dedication Day," was sponsored by the National Council of Federated Church Women and advocated church women's greater dedication to the social concerns of local communities. In 1939 the groups merged to become the National Council of Church Women. The organization soon held its first annual observance of a day "to strengthen a growing sense of unity, the joy of Christian fellowship, and the power of Christianity in

the day of need." In 1945 the observance officially became May Fellowship Day, and in 1999 Church Women United changed the name to May Friendship Day. As with the original focus, this year's May Friendship Day centers on the role of Christian women in addressing the social needs of children.

**Our day began with a welcome to Westminster Presbyterian Church** by Ruth Hein, Moderator of Presbyterian Women of Westminster and the Rev. Scott Anderson, who gave us a brief history and the involvements of Westminster. Rev. Anderson is the new pastor there and enthusiastically embraces the welcoming nature of this congregation, part of the Nakoma Community for over 100 years. One way of welcoming, when Medinah Elementary School lost their building to fire, Westminster invited them to meet in their building while they rebuilt. The relationship with this Muslim school has gone so well that they have remained as weekly tenants.

Westminster also adopted Thoreau Elementary through the Adopt-A-School program and has provided everything from snow pants to pen pals for Thoreau's students. They also support the Allied Drive Neighborhood through an Eviction Prevention Fund and the food pantry. As you can see, Westminster is mission-oriented.

**Next on the program, the annual meeting**, chaired by President Ann Sowaske. We received reports financial and program from officers and committees and then elected officers. President, Ann Sowaske; Secretary, Barbara Eggleston; Treasurer, Marleen Lippert; Ecumenical Celebrations Chair, Ruth Hein; Key Women Chairs, Crystal Betterley and Ellie Metzloff; Enabling Chair, Shirly Robbins; Nominating Chair, Shirley Alexander; MEC Treasurer, Rita Honnold. Open offices are Vice President, Ecumenical Action, and Bylaws.

**The MEC Directory Project received extensive discussion on its importance**, financing, collecting data, and assembling the results. The directory sells for \$10, and costs \$4 to mail. One way to help fi-

nance this is by advertising in the directory. A couple of funeral homes advertise there, and we need to reach out to others who might advertise there. Rates are \$90 for full page, \$50 half page, \$25 quarter page, and \$10 for calling card size. The new directory is due out in September, and we still need volunteers to telephone agencies to verify information.

Why it's important to have this directory. The directory is something that helps a church when people show up seeking help. The listing of services and programs gives them a way to steer people to the help they need. And when clergy visit the Dane County Jail, they don't get in if their names are not in that book. So CWU key women and members are urged to share this project with their churches through sharing with the congregation, the church office, and their pastors. Susan Becker also suggested that we invite pastors to attend a specific program during the year.

**We also got updates on our ARC project.** Audrey Hinger was unable to do the book project this year, so we sent our gift of \$1,022.88 to ARC which used it to help their women pay for their GED testing and to enhance their parenting nurturing and trauma curriculums with DVD's and workbooks such as Stephanie Covington's Beyond Trauma and Stephen Bavolek's Nurturing Program for Parents and their Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers. And they will be purchasing recreational supplies such as knitting/crochet supplies, and various craft supplies for their women and children to assist them in expressing themselves and bring out their creative side, especially for the pregnant/postpartum women who have difficulty getting out.

**Our Jail Ministry fundraiser raised \$1005.** Maybe we should have a fundraiser for CWU and/or the Directory project. We received the treasurer's reports for both CWU and MEC. Balances are down in both accounts. CWU expenses include rent, telephone, newsletter (production, mailing, bulk mail permit), insurance. MEC shares rent, telephone, insurance, and has directory expenses.

**Offerings:** In addition to the report for 2016 printed in the Annual Reports, Marleen noted that last year we kept all the May Friendship Day offering for our local group. We usually send 1/2 to state, but we are low again this year. Marleen Lippert reports that on Friday we received \$591.20 for Fellowship of the Least Coin offering, \$317 for lunch, and \$287.00 for May Friendship Day offering. Some 40 people attended this year.

**Nineteen churches have given Fair Share donations** so far this year. So many churches no longer have women's groups, so it is important to ask your church to add CWU to the church's budget, or find another group that would like to support our mission. And Ann Sowaske will take up the issue of supporting local CWUs at the state board meeting on May 11.

**Another way to support our CWU:** at present, Ann is the only member who spends one hour a week at our CWU office to answer mail and telephone messages. If you could donate an hour for manning the office, please give Ann a call. 608-238-7903

**Note that the CWU state meeting is set for September 16** at Emmanuel Lutheran in Watertown and the speaker will be the CWU national president, Pattie Polk.

**After the meeting,** some 40 people enjoyed a salad lunch, and then received a bonus to the day. Ken Taylor, a member of the Wisconsin Council on Children & Families gave us a program on **Reducing Child Poverty in Wisconsin.** Their Faithful Citizenship/Child Poverty Initiative aims to make this happen. Starting in 2014 in connection with other groups, such as the Wisconsin Council of Churches, they began forums on the issue, and have had 24 forums. They espouse research, engagement, advocacy. Advocating for system to work better. Questions: Who is poor? How prevalent? Racial factors, causes, efforts to address the problems? Children are now the poorest segment of our society. In the 1950's senior citizens were the poorest, and we invested to change this and were successful. From 1959 to 2010, senior poverty has gone down, and at first kids' poverty also went down, but then child poverty went back up. Family economic status is the measurement involved here. Today's poverty line for a family of 3 is \$20,000. Now kid's poverty rate is 22%. Senior poverty has gone from 35% to 9%. Poverty is not equally distributed. It is expanding racially, by area, a huge geographic area, especially in the west and north. African Americans are 5 times more so than whites, Native Americans, 4 times. Children are the poorest segment of Wisconsin, and higher than the rest of the nation. Wisconsin is among most racially discriminatory. Pulling children out of poverty makes the biggest difference. We must help families to help children.

Poverty is not the result of moral failing, kids are not responsible for their condition, poverty is made by humans. The aim of WCCF and its fellow groups is to end child poverty by 2020. The British have brought their rate way down. We can do that.

Conclusions of their many forums are that Wisconsin needs to set a goal to cut child poverty in half over the next 10 years, reduce racial disparities by half, commit to annual evidence-based evaluation of the process. The path forward to cutting both in half is to build a larger group of believers, seek control of elected offices, force a choice for or against. We can't expect faith communities to fill all the gaps. Need to force a choice, have politicians say for or against cutting child poverty in half. We must create a context where they can't claim not to know. Focus on moral clarity and moral choice. State with faith, moral clarity, and focus on what we agree on. We need state government to adopt this goal and work toward it. Put goal in state law. And track the results. The obstacle is the will, not the way. It's up to us, the faith community, to take this on.

Go to the Wisconsin Council of Churches website, download presentation. Check the Race to Equity Project. Check the YMCA website. WCCF is trying to speak to different churches. The goal is to support working families through education, national health issues.

And go to [www.tinyurl.com/cutchildpoverty](http://www.tinyurl.com/cutchildpoverty) to send an endorsement of Wisconsin setting this goal.

All of this took place before we moved to the sanctuary for the worship service.

**Worship:** We began with the choir singing *A Friendly World*, a piece written by Lois Steadman for our choir many years ago. Then after the opening prayer, we sang Send down the fire of your justice. Send down the rains of your love; come, send down the Spirit, breathe life in your people, and we shall be people of God. The verses call for compassion, mercy, love, peace, truth, healing, answering oppression, witness, and justice.

The responsive scripture reading of Matthew 18 elicited this response from all. For the presence of children among us and for those gifts which you bestow on us through them, O Lord, we pray.

This was a beautiful lead-in to a special moment. The children of the Medinah school had joined us, and they sang a song in Arabic, and we had an English translation. Greetings O' Ramadan, you have honored us O' month of the Quran, O' you who are sleeping, wake up and glorify the One that lasts forever, with the fasting Muslims, that stand up at night to pray, God grants you all forgiveness. The song continued through several verses.

What a beautiful juxtaposition—us singing for the presence of children among us and the singing of these children.

The next song on our program, *Do Not Turn Away the Children*. We sang to a familiar hymn tune. Written by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, the lyrics were so perfect for the occasion. “Do not turn away the children; let them come to me instead. For to them belongs the kingdom, Make them welcome!” Christ, you said.

We received the Fellowship of the Least Coin offering and then the May Friendship Day offering while the choir sang *Let There be Peace on Earth*. After a prayer of dedication, we all joined in singing *Pass it On*. “It only takes a spar to get a fire going. And soon all those around can warm up with its glowing. That's how it is with God's love, once you've experienced it. You spread His love to everyone; You want to pass it on.”

**What a rich day we had, of fellowship, community, purpose, and celebration.** Kindling New Fires of Love was the perfect ending to our 2016-2017 program year. Thank you, Ruth Hein, Westminster Lutheran, Ken Taylor, Jenny Armstrong, the choir and Medinah Elementary.