

"I am setting a
plumb line in the
midst of my people..."

Amos 7:8



WITNESS

Oregon-Idaho Chapter, Methodist Federation for Social Action

January 15, 2022

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God... Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise God, my help and my God.
Psalm 42:1-2, 11



What is it you long for in 2022? What justice issue stands out most to you – voter suppression, racism, gun violence, immigration, Covid vaccinations, housing evictions, living wages, climate change ... and so many others. What issues speak to you?

As we enter this new year, a year that looks too much like the last one, it is so easy to feel cast down, restless, wondering when will anything ever change; to let it all become too much and enter into a futility about making a difference or changing anything.

How do we enter into the year with hope, with an understanding that we are called to spread the light of God? One way is to pick one issue and get to work. And we have a great opportunity before us (at least if you live in Oregon).

Lift Every Voice Oregon is now in the process of gathering signatures for two petitions to go on the November 2022 Oregon ballot. These petitions promote public safety and reduce gun violence. Petition 17 "requires permit to acquire firearms; police maintain permit/firearm database; criminally prohibits certain ammunition magazines." Petition 18 "prohibits manufacturing/possessing/transferring many semiautomatic firearms; criminal penalties; exceptions require firearm registration, restrict use." The full explanation of these two petitions can be found at www.lifteveryvoiceoregon.com. The website is also the location for downloading signature sheets that you can take to friends, neighbors, or your congregation.

If you would like to have further conversation about these two petitions, you can contact any of our MFSA board members. At our January 11

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NOW'S THE TIME FOR ACTION

Dates to Remember

Feb. 8:
1:00-3:00pm PT/2:00-4:00pm MT
Oregon-Idaho MFSA Executive Board meeting, via ZOOM

May 10: Newsletter submission Deadline

www.oimfsa.org
oregonidaho@mfsaweb.org



board meeting, we had a presentation for the board and a few others who joined us about *Lift Every Voice Oregon's* work with these two petitions and the signature campaign. You can view a video of our discussion here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1x74nTC6UrPkp856kc9wUnL35-5sVqb0W/view?usp=sharing>
Full details are also available on their website.

Let this be the year we make a difference – no matter what justice issue you choose to put your energy into. And may we walk into this year in the hope and light of God.

Working Together for Justice,
Karen Nelson



YOU ARE INVITED to any of our regular MFSA Board meetings!

We are meeting virtually every month on the 2nd Tuesday from 1:00pm-3:00pm PT/2:00pm-4:00pm MT.
Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 8.

Our meetings sometimes begin with a short program on topics relating to social justice. If YOU or your group has an idea for a future program you would like to share, please let us know!

If you would like to join us, please contact Karen Nelson for the ZOOM link.



VISIONS OF ACTION

Immigrant rights/citizenship rights rally
Sponsored by Latino groups in Salem
October 28

NEWS, OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTION

LEARN ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS COVENANT

Jan Nelson

The Christmas Covenant is a proposal for restructuring the United Methodist Church that is before the General Conference when it meets. It was written by a team of members of our central conferences, the UMC outside the United States, and it focuses on a regional structure that is the same in all places and gives regions more autonomy in their governance. MFSA is a supporter of the Christmas Covenant.

At our annual conference in 2021, Oregon-Idaho delegates voted to study the Christmas Covenant, with the possibility of voting to endorse its passage this year. The Christmas Covenant team has a very informative website at www.christmascovenant.com. There is also a video available of a presentation that was made to the Oregon-Idaho Reconciling United Methodists this month. The video can be viewed at https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/houv-Iku5V_FDg-aHGIL_4vjCB5_btXvHrONiY68Uzt-Sp-gXSgh4Smki0xFSKV_rPDpungtt8E7UKI3 Passcode: *bp8G!sD

The presentation is about one hour long, including question and answer time.

We encourage everyone to get informed about this proposal. Please share this information widely, especially with people who are voting members of Annual Conference.

MFSA RENEWAL REMINDER

Greg Nelson

It's there.

Somewhere in that pile of mail.

The 2022 MFSA membership letter.

If you find it, it will tell you about the challenges of staying connected as a justice seeking organization in a global pandemic. And it will tell you about resources for justice on the oimfsa.org and mfsaweb.org websites. And it will tell you about organizations that we work in concert with on the struggle for justice.

AND, it will tell you it's time to renew your membership in MFSA – a voice for justice in the UMC since 1907. You can renew either by mailing the enclosed form (with that letter) to our membership secretary, Louise Kienzle, or going to www.oimfsa.org/join right now and renewing, or starting a new membership in MFSA.

So, here's your chance to take care of one thing on your To-Do List. [Click now](#) to support MFSA.



LIFT EVERY VOICE OREGON SPONSORING BALLOT MEASURE INITIATIVES TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE

Steve Mitchell



Lift Every Voice Oregon is sponsoring two ballot measure initiatives to reduce gun violence, and is in the process of enlisting people to gather signatures. An online training for gathering signatures is being offered Tuesday, February 3, for those interested in helping get these measures on the November 2022 ballot. Those interested in gathering signatures and receiving training are encouraged to visit the website listed at the end of this article.

Here is information about the two proposed ballot measures.

IP 17 - "Reduction of Gun Violence Act" **Safer Owners and Less Lethal Ammunition**

Major Proposed Changes to Oregon State law:

1. Safer Owners – achieved by requiring anyone buying a gun to have a Permit-to-Purchase
2. Permits-to-Purchase will require: (a) a completed background check – no loopholes; and (b) both classroom and live-fire training.
3. Safer Firearms – achieved by restricting future sale and manufacture of ammunition magazines to no more than 10 rounds.
4. Exceptions: (a) future manufacture of magazines will require they be stamped as made after the effective date and their use will be limited to military and law enforcement; and (b) large-capacity magazines owned on the effective date of the Act may be retained and used on a restricted basis, but not sold/transferred.

IP 18 - "Reduction of Harm from Weapons Act" **Stop Proliferation of Assault Weapons**

Major Changes to Oregon State law:

1. The future manufacture, import, possession, use, purchase and otherwise transferring of "semiautomatic assault firearms" (as defined in the Act) are banned.
2. Those owned prior to the effective date of the Act must, within 180 days, be sold to licensed dealers, turned in for destruction, permanently disabled or, if retained, then registered with the State Police.
3. The retained firearms are restricted to use at home, shooting ranges, shooting competitions and some outdoor recreational activities such as hunting, provided they are unloaded and locked when being transported.
4. Exceptions exist for manufacturing and sales solely for military and law enforcement purposes.

To get more information and sign up for the training, visit this website: www.lifteveryvoiceoregon.com

SUPPORTING JUSTICE ADVOCATES IN KENYA

Jan Nelson

The newest MFSA chapter is in Kenya. Rev. Sammy Kagwi regularly participates in Program Council meetings with representatives from other chapters. Their chapter is planning an ambitious program for early this year, but they need help with funding it.

At our last meeting, the Program Council heard and accepted a proposal from Rev. Sammy. The proposal is to partner with Kenya MFSA to train people in social advocacy to work within the Kenya-Ethiopia Conference. The request is for \$2500. Details of the proposal are on our website <https://www.oimfsa.org/news/supporting-justice-advocates-in-kenya>



The Program Council approved this request and are committed to raising the \$2500 from among our chapters and individual gifts. The Oregon-Idaho chapter has made a \$500 gift from our funds. We invite anyone who wishes to contribute by mailing a check to MFSA at 23 East Adams Ave, Detroit MI 48226 with a notation for 'Kenya Chapter Project.'

Leaders needed

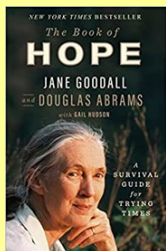
Are you interested in becoming more involved in MFSA? Consider becoming a member of our executive committee to plan and direct our actions. We are looking for a few good people for a 3-year term beginning in July 2022. If you want to know more, contact Karen Nelson.



BOOKS, VIDEOS, MOVIES...

*Sometimes one stumbles across a book, article, video or movie and thinks:
"my social justice friends need to read/see this!"*

Please share your suggestions with newsletter editor Louise Kienzle at kienzle.louise@gmail.com for a future edition.



The Book of Hope by Jane Goodall and Douglas Abrams *(submitted by Jan Nelson)*

The title of the book grabbed me in a time when hope seems elusive. It is a series of interviews of Jane Goodall by Doug Abrams, who also co-authored *The Book of Joy* with Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama. The conversations center on Jane's reasons for having hope in spite of all that is wrong in the natural and the human world. There are deeply spiritual elements, but this not a book based in religion. Her stories from all parts of the world are uplifting, and include examples of both human and non-human reasons for hope. I found it encouraging and something I will return to again.

NOW'S THE TIME FOR ACTION

Now is the time to continue to push for broad systemic change. Here are a few ways you can take action to seek justice:

Human Rights and Economic Justice

- [Contact your Senators and Representatives](#) to pass common sense legislation that saves the lives of farm workers like the [Asunción Valdivia Heat Illness and Fatality Prevention Act](#).
- In solidarity, [join workers demanding \\$15/hr](#) and tell McDonald's to raise wages now.

- Check out what [military acquired by your local law enforcement](#), and [sign the petition to demanding more police transparency](#).
- Call your legislators ([202-224-3121](#)) and advocate for permanent federal paid sick leave, expanded unemployment benefits, SNAP increases, and a moratorium on evictions, utility shut-offs, and payments.
- In solidarity, [join workers demanding \\$15/hr](#) and tell McDonald's to raise wages now.
- Join the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and students around the U.S. and [send an email to major U.S. food delivery services to "stop doing business with Wendy's"](#) until the hamburger giant ensures enforceable protections for farmworkers' human rights by joining the Fair Food Program."

Racial Justice

- Tell your Member of Congress to support the [Accessible, Affordable Internet for All \(AAIA\) Act](#), an act that can help bridge the digital divide that disproportionately impacts Black, Latinx, Indigenous, rural, or low-income people.
- Check the [State Voting Bills Tracker to find out if your state lawmakers have introduced one of the 253 bills aimed at suppressing voting rights](#), and contact your state lawmakers to demand they support voting rights.
- [Contact your elected officials to take an intersectional response to the incidents of AAPI hate](#) and to center the needs of those most impacted, Asian American women and elders.
- Grow in your personal learning or as a community with a **group study** by taking advantage of [free online university courses on systemic racism](#).

Immigration and Refugee Rights

- AIDNW continues to serve 50+ newly release guests outside Tacoma's NW ICE Processing Center at the RV Welcome Center each day. They are in desperate need of volunteers and supplies. [Find out how you can help!](#)
- The pandemic marginalizes those already most marginalized in society. [Host a virtual Card Writing Party](#) to write and mail **letters to immigrants** in detention via [The Casa Mariposa Detention Visitation Program](#).
- [Contact your members of Congress](#) and tell them to stop the use of [Title 42 policy](#) to deny Haitian migrants' rights to seek asylum, restore asylum protections, and stop all deportation flights and expulsions to Haiti.
- Contact your elected officials and [demand Congress cut funding for ICE and CBP and defund hate](#).
- The [Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice](#) (IMIrJ) hosts **IMIrJ Advocacy Nights** on the 2nd Monday of each month from 6:00-7:30pm. [RSVP here](#) and invite your friends to join you!
- [Sign the petition](#) to call on President Biden and Congress to deliver permanent protections for millions of immigrants who call America home and put an end to the fear of deportations and family separations.
- Join the [#WelcomeWithDignity movement by signing the pledge](#) to reimagine the way our country and our communities treat people seeking safety.
- [Write a letter](#) and join in the grassroots organizing for the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants.
- Advocate for immigrants. [Find ways to take action](#).

Justice in the Holy Land

- Urge your members of Congress to co-sponsor [HR 2590](#): Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act.
- Write to the leadership of the township of Fairfield, CT to contact Sturm Ruger, the largest firearm manufacturer in the United States with headquarters in Fairfield, and [demand the company suspend weapon and bullet sales to Israel](#).
- Tell President Biden and Vice President Harris to hold Israel accountable to its obligations as an occupying power and [insist that Israel provide COVID-19 vaccines equally and fairly to Palestinians living under its occupation](#).
- Manufacturing in an illegal Israeli settlement is a war crime. Tell General Mills to stop making Pillsbury products on stolen Palestinian land by [signing the petition](#), [sending an email to the CEO](#), and [#BoycottPillsbury](#).
- Check out the [BDS Toolkit](#) and learn what economic actions you can take to fight along the side of Palestinians and their struggle.
- [Sign the petition](#) and join [Palestinian Cry for Hope: a Call to Decisive Action](#), a global movement set by *Kairos Response* that "rouses churches to action and awakens civil society to the reality of Palestinian suffering."

Gun Violence

- Lift Every Voice Oregon* is now in the process of gathering signatures for two petitions to go on the November 2022 Oregon ballot. These petitions promote public safety and reduce gun violence. [Sign petitions from home](#).

Peace and Justice

- Has your country signed on to the [UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#)? Contact your elected officials to support the end of nuclear weapons in the world.

Death Penalty Abolition

- Sign the petition and tell Congress to [abolish the federal death penalty](#).

Justice for those with Disabilities

- Learn how you and your ministry can truly embody open hospitality by [enrolling in Be A Disciple's courses and getting a Certification in Ministry with People with Disabilities](#).

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For information about MFSA and our chapter, current news, resources and more, go to www.oimfsa.org.

