

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

Amos 7:8



WITNESS

Oregon-Idaho Chapter, Methodist Federation for Social Action

May 15, 2022

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Who Gets to Choose?

Stopping at the local coffee shop – you get to choose what kind of coffee to order. Heading to the grocery store – you get to choose the store and the items you will purchase. Brushing your teeth – you get to choose the kind of toothbrush you use and the toothpaste that goes on it. Making health care decisions about your own body – not so much choice if you are a woman, at least if we are talking about reproductive health choices.



It creates such deep distress to hear that we are most likely going back 50 years in our understanding and willingness to let women make their own health care decisions around reproductive health. There is a vocal minority, including several Supreme Court justices, who believe they have the right to tell women what they can and cannot do with their bodies. This minority frames their argument around "right to life". Yet this same minority has done little or nothing to help provide prenatal care for pregnant women; health care for a newborn, accessible childcare; free preschool; healthy food and safe living conditions. So whose life are we talking about in their argument?

Research shows that nearly 6 in 10 Americans support the right to abortion. Making a woman's right to choose illegal will not stop abortions. Women choose abortions for a variety of reasons that make sense for them and their lives, and they will continue to do so. Making abortion illegal will only create more deaths – deaths of women who felt they had no alternative in their lives but to choose an illegal, high-risk abortion, or who may be forced into a high risk birth.

The Turnaway Study is a longitudinal study examining the effects of unwanted pregnancy on women's lives. This study shows that women who have chosen abortion at some time in their lives are healthier and more well-adjusted to life than their peers who were denied an abortion. Greater harm happens to women and their families when they are denied an abortion – financial hardship lasting multiple years, increased poverty which has a negative impact on children already in the family, women remaining with an abusive/violent partner, more serious health problems during pregnancy and birth. Women who receive a wanted abortion are more financially stable, set more ambitious goals, raise children under more stable conditions, and are more likely to have a wanted child later. To learn the details of this study, go to <https://www.ansirh.org/research/ongoing/turnaway-study>.

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This is one of those times we need to do more than study and lament. We need to take action at the ballot box, in the street, in uncomfortable conversations with our family and friends. We can't legislate abortion out of existence. It is up to us to raise our voices in a multitude of ways and make sure that women do get to choose what happens to their bodies.

Working Together for Justice,
Karen Nelson



Dates to Remember

June 7:
6:30pm PT/7:30pm MT
Annual Meeting—Change is a comin':
How You Can Have a Say

July 5:
1:00-3:00pm PT/2:00-4:00pm MT
Oregon-Idaho MFSA Executive Board
meeting, via ZOOM

September 10: Newsletter submission
Deadline

www.oimfsa.org
oregonidaho@mfsaweb.org



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, July 5.

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



Martin Luther King Jr. Day;
march and gathering hosted
by Hermiston UMC and
organized by the Hermiston
Cultural Awareness
Coalition.

Oregon-Idaho MFSA Annual Meeting



CHANGE IS A-COMIN'

HOW YOU
CAN HAVE A SAY

Oregon-Idaho MFSA Annual Meeting

Tuesday, June 7

6:30pm PDT/7:30pm MDT

Register at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMpcumuqDojG91EEJCABFvcVwwJXmi1BQIR>

**LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP:
EXAMINING THE CHOICES
BETWEEN THE UMC AND THE
GMC**

Session II in the UMARC series:
May 17, 8 PM Eastern

Dr. Rebekah Miles returns to host this webinar. Guests include Dr. Harvey Martz, Martha Stokes, Derrick Scott III, Rev. David Livingston, and Rev. Dr. Israel Alvaran (images L to R, top to bottom)



FREE REGISTRATION: WWW.UMARC.ORG



Get more information and register at:
<https://www.umar.org>

STEALING THE EARTH

THE CONQUERING OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE,
THE ROLE OF CHRISTIANITY, AND WHAT CAN BRING ABOUT JUSTICE
A FIVE-PART WEBINAR SERIES



PRESENTED BY

MFSA Methodist Federation
for Social Action (MFSA)

The Native American
International Caucus (NAIC)

UMKR United Methodists for
Kahoon Response (UMKR)

Session 5: "Undoing the Doctrine"
May 25, 2022
10:00am PT/11:00am MT
Learn more and register at:
<https://www.mfsaweb.org/stealing-the-earth>

NEWS, OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTION

OREGON-IDAHO MFSA ANNUAL MEETING

Greg Nelson

CHANGE IS A COMIN': HOW YOU CAN HAVE A SAY

June 7, 2022 ~ 6:30 PM Pacific Time / 7:30 Mountain Time



There are lots of changes happening in The United Methodist Church. Not just the formation of a breakaway segment, but changes in episcopal leadership and how we are connected as a church. We'll try to look at many of these in our meeting, and give you some ideas about how your voice can be heard.

Please invite others to join our annual meeting! Especially your church's lay member to Annual Conference and your pastor! These are the voting members of annual conference that represent your congregation; make sure they know how you feel about the issues that will be before them this year.

Register at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMpcumuqDojG91EEJCABFvcVwwJXmi1BQIR>

MORE ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS COVENANT

Jan Nelson

At Annual Conference last year, MFSA sponsored a petition to endorse the Christmas Covenant, a package a of legislation that will come before the next General Conference. The subject was new to many people, so there was limited support for it. The item was changed from a call for support to a call for study and passed in that form. We hope that members, especially those who will be voting at annual conference, had time to learn more about the Christmas Covenant. But with a global pandemic and changing schedules in the UMC for General and Jurisdictional Conference, you may not have seen more than headlines.

Here is some background information that can help you know more about the Christmas Covenant before it is voted on in June. **Please share this information, especially with people you know who are voting members of Annual Conference.**

What is the Christmas Covenant?

The Christmas Covenant is a set of legislation and constitutional amendments submitted to the United Methodist Church's (UMC) General Conference with the goal of establishing regional equity in the structures of the church for missional effectiveness while sustaining connectional unity. It is rooted in the following values: Connectional relationships rooted in mission, Respect for contextual ministry settings, and Legislative equality for regional bodies of the church.

Who wrote the Christmas Covenant?

The Christmas Covenant legislation was written primarily by United Methodists from Africa, Europe and the Philippines; in other words, United Methodists from Central Conferences and not the United States.

Is the Christmas Covenant about LGBTQI inclusion?

No, it's about changing our US centered colonial system and moving the Central Conferences (The UMC outside the United States) to a more equal footing with the US based church. Both the central conferences (renamed regional

conferences in the proposal), and the United States based church (The US Regional Conference) would be able to work with the cultural realities of their region.

What would it look like?

The major change would be a Regional Conference to deal with church matters in the US that is separate from the General Conference session that deals with the UMC around the world. Currently, delegates from Africa, Europe, and the Philippines spend much of their time trying to understand legislation that only affects the US church.

Why do Annual Conferences need to endorse this?

Endorsement by conferences and other groups helps to create a movement of support for this change. A number of Annual Conferences have already endorsed the Christmas Covenant, including North Texas, Florida delegation, California-Pacific, California-Nevada, Mountain Sky, all 5 Davao Area conferences (Philippines), and 2 Manila Area conferences (Philippines). In addition, the proposal is supported by the UMC Connectional Table, United Methodist Women, and MARCHA (UMC National Hispanic Caucus).

Here is a link to the full FAQ page: <https://www.christmascovenant.com/faqs>

Wasn't there a webinar about this?

YES! The Western Methodist Justice Movement hosted a webinar last June. You can watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmLXSm7jvks>

2022 MFSA LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS



MFSA is a social justice organization founded in 1907 originally to speak out against child labor. It was created through the United Methodist Church and for many years was the voice for social justice within the church. Later it became a distinct, stand-alone organization working alongside the church.

Today the Oregon-Idaho chapter of MFSA brings to the Annual Conference much of the justice legislation that comes before us. In addition, the MFSA board reviews all the legislation coming to Annual Conference and makes recommendations on the issues that speak to social justice.

We offer these recommendations for you and urge you to be in conversation with your member to Annual Conference and pastor about legislation. You can find the full text of legislation at: www.umoi.org/ac

Legislative Item	MFSA Recommends:	Comments
Action Requests		
AR 1: Identifying and Opposing Apartheid in the Holy Land	Vote Yes	The people of Palestine continue to be isolated and persecuted by the nation of Israel.
AR 2: Support the Christmas Covenant	Vote Yes	Reduces colonialism in the structure of the church and enables ministry in regional context. Prepared by central conference representatives.
AR 3: Amendments to Local Church Disaffiliation Agreement Template		Ruled out of order by Bishop Stanovsky at the legislative assembly
AR 4: Fulfilling our Baptismal Vows to Children of Clergy	No Recommendation	
AR 5: Call for a Jurisdictional Episcopacy Study Committee		Pending action by Legislative Assembly

AR 6: Call for an Episcopacy Transitional Class		Pending action by Legislative Assembly
AR 7: Amending Clergy Housing Standards and Policy		Pending action by Legislative Assembly
AR 8: New Ministerial Education Fund Policy	Vote Yes	MFSA supports ongoing education for leaders both clergy and laity.
Standing Resolutions		
SR 1: Aligning our Investments with Values Regarding Palestine and Israel	Vote Yes for renewal	Continues our support for divestment from companies that support the illegal occupation of Palestine.
SR 2: Affirming and Celebrating All Transgender Children of God	Vote Yes	MFSA supports inclusion of all people in God's community.
SR 3: Support Disaffiliation for the Cause of Full Inclusion	No Recommendation	
SR 4: A Call to Civility	Vote Yes for renewal as amended	As we stand in solidarity with people who are oppressed, we must work with civil conversation and respect.
SR 5: Standing Up for Inclusion	Vote Yes for renewal	We acknowledge that ours is a diverse conference which demands respect for all.
SR 6: We are UMC	Vote Yes	MFSA supports making the existing UMC a fully inclusive body.
SR 7: Advocating for Comprehensive Immigration Reform	Vote Yes	We support the UMC position on comprehensive immigration reform and call on churches to welcome immigrants and oppose the rise of xenophobia and racism.

PALESTINE NEWS

Dee Poujade

Two major items of concern regarding Israel/ Palestine are in the news – one that is local to Oregon (although it has received national attention!) and one international in scope. The “local” item is that Oregon’s employee pension fund is currently one of Novalpina Capital’s largest investors following the Oregon Investment Council decision to approve a \$233 million investment in the company in 2017. Novalpina is an Israeli company whose product, Pegasus spyware, has been used globally to hack into the cellphones of journalists, activists, diplomats and heads of state. This news is disturbing on many levels. Its surveillance technology enables grave human rights abuses around the world, including against Palestinian civil society activists and human rights workers.

Last year, President Biden put Novalpina on a “blacklist” preventing companies from doing business with the company. Lawsuits have been filed against the company for its “flagrant human rights abuses.” Yet it remains in Oregon’s pension portfolio – much to the dismay of many!

The Corvallis Palestine Solidarity Group has drafted a letter to Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Reed, asking him to end the state’s partnership with this group. If you would like to read and/or sign the letter, contact valori@peak.org,

On the international scene, many of you are probably already aware of the Amnesty International report which calls Israel an



“apartheid state.” Of course, when this report came out, Israel immediately began its pushback – accusing Amnesty (a large well-respected international human rights organization) of “antisemitism” – the usual “dog whistle” word to discourage any criticism of the Israeli government! Although this report has received some news coverage, many major outlets (including the *New York Times*) have chosen not to report it.

The report is available on Amnesty’s website, as is a 15 minute video that provides salient details (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>)

TAKE ACTION TO MAKE OREGON SAFER

Claudia Roberts

Oregon is on a path to pass common sense laws that will help reduce gun violence in our state. Lift Every Voice Oregon is a faith-based grass roots organization that is working to change Oregon gun laws to help ensure that responsible gun owners can retain their rights, and the new gun owners are better vetted to make our communities safer from gun accidents and acts of violence. They have written two propositions which will appear on the November 2022 ballot.



IP 17: Safer Owners and Less Lethal Ammunition is the measure that would require a Permit-to-Purchase for all firearm purchases. It requires new owners to complete safety training, both classroom and live-fire, and a background check to be completed before purchasing a gun. It would create an improved database to assist tracking guns that are lost, stolen or used to commit crimes.

Less Lethal Ammunition bans future sale of large capacity magazines. It prohibits manufacture, sale, transfer and possession of magazines over 10 rounds. Previously owned magazines may be retained with limited use. The only exception is for duty-only use by military and law enforcement.

IP 18: Stops the Proliferation of Assault Weapons This proposition prohibits future manufacture, import, purchase, transfer, possession, and use of semiautomatic assault firearms with limited exceptions.

Covered firearms owned at the time of passage may be retained, if registered with the State and if use is limited to the owner’s property, shooting ranges and hunting (if OR regulations allow). This includes homemade and 3-D printed so called undetectable “Ghost guns”. The only exceptions are for duty-only use by military and law enforcement.

You can read full copies of these propositions and sign petitions to support these measures at www.LiftEveryVoiceOregon.com

TRINITY UMC—A BEACON TO THOSE SEEKING TOLERANCE AND ACCEPTANCE

*Bev Kemp, SPR Chair, Trinity UMC
Idaho Falls, Idaho*

Trinity UMC in Idaho Falls, ID, founded over a hundred years ago, has maintained its presence in the community in several ways. Idaho is a different environment than our sister states in the conference and Idaho Falls is even more unique. We live in an extremely conservative atmosphere both politically and socially. By our openness and nonjudgmental attitude we serve as a beacon to those seeking tolerance and acceptance.

From the welcome we extended to our local Japanese population during World War II to our present Day Shelter for neighbors struggling financially, Trinity has always been known as a safe place where all are welcome. This is especially true in this current political climate, including the current threat to Roe vs Wade. We have fourth generation members of those Japanese families as well as those recently so severely affected by the COVID crisis that they find themselves financially overwhelmed.

Our Day Shelter has its origin in the "stay home" order issued at the beginning of the crisis. It's hard to stay home when you don't have one. We realized, led by the remarkable leadership of our pastor, Ruth Marsh, that we were called to offer our large building and facilities to our neighbors as a way to, if not eliminate, then at least lessen their suffering. As we got to know them and their needs, we expanded our efforts. We serve breakfast, lunch and dinner in a safe welcoming environment served at times to supplement, not replace, existing efforts to lessen hunger in the city. For example, dinner is served later than the only other evening meal in town to accommodate those who are working and cannot come earlier because we serve as many working poor as truly homeless. In addition to meals, and not inconsequentially, someone to eat with, we have showers and washer and dryers. Although many of our guests are not technically homeless, they have no washer and dryer, some having no electricity or dependable hot water. We provide both laundry supplies and personal hygiene items. We even have a supporter who provides dog food as many of our folks have dogs. These pets provide great comfort to those alone in the world. We also attempt to remove barriers by working with other assistance groups to provide picture IDs, drivers' licenses, and work clothes as needed.

We, at Trinity, are truly blessed to be able to live out every day, our charge to love one another.

BLACK LUNG BENEFITS: MINE WORKERS & THEIR FAMILIES NEED OUR HELP

Bob Rossi, Courtney Rhodes, and Willie Dodson

Black lung, or coal workers pneumoconiosis, is caused by inhaling coal and silica dust in the coal mines and coal processing plants. The dust becomes airborne as coal is cut and loaded by machines, transported, and processed. Black lung disables mine workers by restricting breathing. I believe that black lung can be eliminated in large part by enforcing and improving mine safety and health standards through union safety committees and changes in mining technology.

When I was younger, it was common for mine workers in their 60s and 70s to have black lung. Now we see mine workers in their late 30s to 40s with the disease. One clinic in Virginia reported diagnosing a miner at 28 years of age. I believe that lax safety enforcement due to a decline in unionization bears much of the blame for the rise of black lung, but changes in mining technology, and the fact that thinner seams of coal are now being mined, which require miners to cut more silica-producing rock, also contribute to the problem.

The movements for mine safety and health and for getting mine workers and their dependents help and medical coverage reached a high point in the 1960s and early 1970s. Coal mining communities depend on mine workers' wages and benefits and the few super-dedicated healthcare professionals who live in those communities. When I was a kid the coal companies and many government officials claimed that black lung did not exist. A very brave doctor-organizer helped lead a fightback movement, and I remember him taking a workers' lung from a jar near the end of his talks and crumbling it and saying "This is your brother's lung!" That doctor and people power won positive change.

We have to rebuild that fightback spirit because black lung is becoming more common and mine safety and health is suffering. Black Lung Association meetings typically begin with prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance and leaders come from the rank-and-file, miners' families, and from the black lung clinics. Deep in the history of the Black Lung Associations is a legacy of local miner-preachers and community activists, union and non-union. The movement has a legacy of being led in part by African Americans. Despite poor health and tough circumstances, the mine workers and their family members and the Black Lung clinic staffs keep up a determined joy and a fightback spirit.

At the time of this writing, the main effort of the national Black Lung Association is to win back a small increase in the Black Lung Excise Tax, a tax paid by coal companies on coal tonnage that is sold in the United States to support the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund. The tax was cut at the end of 2021 and the Fund is losing money weekly because of the cutback. The need is to restore the tax rate and extend it for 10 years in order to provide medical care and a small disability stipend for mine workers and for their families when the worker passes on. This helps the disabled worker and their family, but it also helps the coal mining communities and the clinics. The Black Lung Association chapters have been fighting on this issue for the past five years, sometimes winning and sometimes losing a one-year extension of the tax at its historic rate. It is unfair to expect people who suffer with black lung to fight every year for their right to live.

Our Senator Wyden (202-228-2717) and Congresswoman Bonamici (202-225-0855) both have a lot to do with winning increases in the tax and extending the program as Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, and as a member of the House Education and Labor Committee, respectively. We have a simple message to send:

“Senator Wyden, coal companies pay the Black Lung Excise Tax in order to fund a federal program that provides medical care and disability benefits to about 30,000 American coal miners who are disabled with black lung, a fatal occupational disease. But at the end of last year, that tax was cut in half due to Congressional inaction. As chair of the Senate Finance Committee, you can help solve this problem by calling for a committee vote on S. 2810, The Black Lung Disability Trust Fund Solvency Act of 2021, which would reinstate the historic rate of the tax on coal for the next 10 years.”

“Congresswoman Bonamici, you are serving on the committee that will be taking up the House bill dealing with the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund Solvency Act of 2021. Please help make sure that it passes.” Please make those calls today.

NEWS FROM WADI FOQUIN

Kirsty Le Grice, Fundraising Manager for a Palestinian NGO

'You can't imagine what we are going through', said Adam Manasra, referring to the pain inflicted on the small community of Wadi Foquin, in the wake of two recent killings by Israeli forces and a backdrop of demolitions, environmental poisoning and continued encroachment on the village lands.

It was a Tuesday evening in Palestine and Adam and several other young people from Wadi Foquin, a village to the Southwest of Bethlehem, had been invited to brief the Friends of Wadi Foquin group on recent developments in the village. Thousands of miles away in California, nearly 40 people had dialed in to hear from Adam and the other young people.

The Friends of Wadi Foquin group was formed in 2009 by United Methodists in California. Over the past 13 years they have established a deep connection with the village, providing a combination of community development work, exchange visits and advocacy work. Their approach was guided each year by the priorities identified by the village, and by tapping into the Methodist Church network in California, and beyond, they had been able to fund a range of successful initiatives over the previous years.

Adam and his peers had prepared a detailed presentation to document the news from the village. It painted a bleak picture. One of the biggest challenges was dealing with the consequences of the plan for the population of the Beitar Ilitt settlement, which loomed over the village, to increase from 60,000 to 100,000. Already the settlement expansion had caused serious detrimental impacts to the environment. Building waste had been dumped on village land, killing crops; explosions had affected ground water; sewage and wastewater had polluted village land causing disease and several of the village's natural springs had dried up. Taken together these



amounted to catastrophic consequences for the livelihood of the village which depended primarily on agriculture.

Another pressing issue for the village is a new road which the Israeli authorities are planning to connect the settlements with Jerusalem. This road will isolate Wadi Foquin from neighbouring villages. The construction would also result in land losses which would not be compensated. Noor, a young woman from the village, reported that in December 2021, 45 olive trees had been uprooted from village land and a further 30 were uprooted in March of this year. This land was far from the green line – the boundary with Israel - and her conclusion was, **'they are doing this only to harm people'**. Destroying olive trees was a common tactic used across the West Bank and the organization Visualizing Palestine estimated that around 800,000 trees had been uprooted across Palestine between 1967 and 2003 – the equivalent of clearing Central Park of trees 33 times over.

This was clearly very distressing for the villagers of Wadi Foquin but more heart- breaking still were the recent killings in Husan, a village only a few kilometres from Wadi Foquin, which had sent shockwaves of grief through both communities. Ghada Sabateen (aged 47) was shot and killed at a flying checkpoint on 10 th April. She was a widower and mother of six children. Ghada had sight problems and was accused of approaching the checkpoint 'in a suspicious manner'. It tragically cost her, her life. Only three days later, Qusai Hamamrah, a 14-year-old boy was also shot and killed. It was reported that he was one of a group of young people throwing Molotov cocktails at Israeli soldiers.

The increased presence of Israeli forces in Palestinian territories has heightened tensions and made avoidable deaths like these, more frequent. Adam and his peers called on the international community to back-up their twitter condolences with more concrete action to safeguard Palestinians on the ground. Sadly, Wadi Foquin is not alone in facing problems with violence, environmental destruction, demolition and confiscations. In fact, these issues are replicated across the villages that surround Wadi Foquin: Husan, Battir, Nahalin, Al Walaja and further afield across the length and breadth of the West Bank. Wadi Foquin is fortunate to have a group of dedicated Friends advocating for them from abroad, and the Friends of Wadi Foquin offers a successful model that other villages would do well to establish.

As 2022 rolls on, the Friends of Wadi Foquin will continue to advocate for the protection and preservation of the village of Wadi Foquin. To find out ways you can support the village contact FWF Co-Chair, Michael Yoshii at michaelyoshii1@gmail.com. And to learn more, go to: <https://www.friendsofwadifoquin.com/>

MISSION TO GYTTE

Dee Poujade

I recently returned from "mission" trip to Mexico, which I think others will find of interest. The quotes around "mission" are intentional – trips to the Tree of Life training center near Tlancualpican are called "GYTTE" (pronounced "Jitty," which is an acronym for Give Ye Them to Eat) Trips and are distinguished from United Methodist Volunteer in Mission trips in that they include educational, inspirational and sightseeing components in addition to the work. Also, while GYTTE is a UM Advance Special, and missionaries Nan McCurdy and Miguel Mairena are General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) missionaries, the work is done in partnership with the Methodist Church of Mexico.



Nan invited me to visit when I emailed her to tell her that FUMC Portland (where I chair the Global Mission committee) had "adopted" her and Miguel as Covenant Missionaries. "It's kind of short notice," she wrote, but a team from Pennsylvania was going down in early March and would I like to join them? Seven weeks later, I was on a United Airlines flight to Mexico City – my first post-COVID trip out of the US! Rev. Marian Hartman met me at the airport (my flight from Houston was late and the rest of the group had gone on to Puebla) and, together, we made the three-hour ride to Puebla on a very comfortable bus.

The team spent the weekend in Puebla, a colonial city of about 1.5 million people, where we got ourselves oriented and enjoyed a bit of sightseeing (and shopping!) Sunday afternoon, we boarded the Center's 12-passwnger van for the 2-hour ride to the training center, which is affectionately called "the Ranch."

Our housing there was in comfortable dormitory rooms (four people per room that could sleep 10) with adjacent showers and (composting) toilets – more about those later! Wonderful meals emitted from the kitchen and the staff even did our laundry for us (understandable when we saw how dirty we would get!).



Unlike many UVMIM teams that I've participated in, this team did not have a singular work assignment, but, rather, rotated through several ongoing projects to get an idea of the variety of work done there. Jobs included building a wood-burning stove (see photo), painting a straw-bale house, laying stones for a walkway, constructing terracing with used tires, and caring for animals and plants. We worked about 5 hours a day in bright sun and hot (90+!) temperatures, finishing in time to shower, eat our main meal of the day (at about 3:30 pm) and then go out into the local villages for experiences that varied from meeting a farmer with a baby donkey to watching a presentation by GYTTE-trained health promoters at a local school and attending an evening service at the local Methodist church.

The Center serves as a teaching laboratory for local people – helping them to build the "bale" houses (which have very thick walls which provides excellent insulation in the hot climate), to install the composting toilets (which use no water and recycle the waste into fertilizer), and to build stoves that require only minimal firewood (a scarce commodity in the area). It also trains women as health promoters, who are available to provide basic medical assistance to the members of their communities, as well as to educate the communities on health-related topics.

At the end of the week, we went back to Puebla, stopping along the way to visit the Cholula Pyramids before a farewell dinner and a very early getup for our return flights!

God willing, I will be organizing a trip down there in the spring of 2023. Stay tuned!



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.

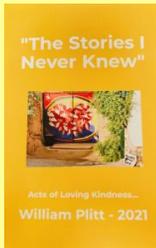


BOOKS, VIDEOS, MOVIES...

*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 Stories I Never Knew: Acts of Loving Kindness amidst the Struggle for Human Rights and Dignity in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel by William Plitt 2021 *(submitted by Rev. Karen Nelson)*



The title of this book says it all. From William Plitt's first journey to Palestine, his life was never the same. This book is a compilation of his reflections on his many trips to Palestine and Israel. He writes about the many people and places he encounters in his travels, especially the work of the Tent of Nations. Bill was instrumental in helping to create Friends of Tent of Nations North America (FOTONNA). He also documents the many tours of Daoud Nasser and other Nasser family members to various places in the United States to share about Tent of Nations, the family farm and the work to keep the land from Israeli occupation, and what it means to live out the message: We Refuse to be Enemies.

A good read for those who have traveled to Tent of Nations and those who would like to travel there in the future.

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

- [Urge your members of Congress to include housing investments in the FY23 federal funding legislation](#) for affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs, including an expansion of rental assistance.
- [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](#).
- [Write your Representative](#) to join Representative Susan Wild and urge the Administration to hold officials responsible for grave human rights violations in the Philippines accountable through targeted sanctions.
- [Sign up for Coalition of Immokalee Workers Fair Food mailing list](#) to learn more about what you can do to advocate for farmworker rights.
- [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](tel: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.

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

- [Contact your members of Congress](#) and urge them to reject the *Public Health and Border Security Act of 2022*, oppose similar measures, and hold the Biden Administration accountable to [ending the Title 42 policy by May 23rd](#).
- Join the [#WelcomeWithDignity movement by signing the pledge](#) to reimagine the way our country and our communities treat people seeking safety.
- 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 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!
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- [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.
- [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

- Join a [National Nonviolent Moral Direct Action Call-In](#) in calling the offices of Senator Manchin, Senator Sinema, Senator McConnell, and Senator Schumer.
- 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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