

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

Amos 7:8



# WITNESS

Oregon-Idaho Chapter, Methodist Federation for Social Action

December 1, 2019

"We all want to be heard, and we want to be part of solutions that help others... Thank you for your courage this year, and for all that you have done to put your faith into action by seeking justice and pursuing peace."

Susan Henry-Crowe

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Eleven years ago, there was an election. We elected a black man as President of the United States. I clearly remember the amazement I felt. While I knew that our country's terrible history with race could not be wiped out by a single election, it felt like an important barrier had been crossed. It seemed like we had made some kind of progress and could look forward to more.



That feels almost like another lifetime. We have watched in horror as hatred came out of the shadows. In the last three years, racial hate has marched openly down the street in a way we thought was far in the past. Oh wait, maybe I just thought it was in the past because I don't have to look at the consequences of racism every day. Maybe it's a good thing that I've been forced to face that the United States is as racist as it has always been.

I just finished reading the book *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo with a group in my congregation. This white author is speaking to a white audience from her years of experience as a diversity trainer about how white people perpetuate racism by our unwillingness to see that it exists and that we benefit from it. It is one good starting point to see reality with new eyes and learn how each of us individually participates in the problem. I had figured out that we still live in a racist society, but reading and discussing this helped me see my personal blind spots, and I found plenty of them. Now I need to decide what I'm going to do about what I learned.

In the coming months, our chapter is inviting everyone to engage with the reality of racism and the many related issues in American society. We will be sharing resources and opportunities to help you get started. We hope that you will choose to engage, not just on your own, but in community within your church or your neighborhood or a virtual community of MFSA members across Oregon and Idaho.

There is so much to learn, and then there is so much to do. My personal next step is to try to learn what it means for me to be actively anti-racist. What is your next step? With God's help, we can all learn and grow and make a difference. It's never too late to start.

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WAKING UP & ME

With you in the struggle for justice,  
Jan

## YOU ARE INVITED

to any of our regular MFSA Board meetings! We will meet every month, usually on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday.

Our **quarterly meetings** will alternate between the Conference Center in Portland and Morningside UMC in Salem. These meetings typically are from **10:30am-2:30pm** and you are invited to attend for any or all of the meeting. Lunch is an 'on your own' sack lunch. We will begin these meetings with a program of up to an hour on topics relating to social justice. If YOU or your group has an idea for a program you would like to share, please let us know!

Other meetings will be via ZOOM.

Upcoming scheduled meetings are:

**December 4 via ZOOM**, beginning at 10:30am

**January 22 in Portland**, from 10:30-2:30

**February 26 via ZOOM**, beginning at 10:30am

If you want to join us, please contact Jan Nelson.

### Dates to Remember

December 4, 10:30am: Oregon-Idaho MFSA Executive Board meeting, via ZOOM

December 12, 12:00pm ET: MFSA National Call

January 8, 4:00pm: Portland Human Rights Commission

January 22, 10:30am: Oregon-Idaho MFSA Executive Board meeting, Portland

February 24: Newsletter submission Deadline

February 26: Oregon-Idaho MFSA Executive Board meeting, via ZOOM

March 8-13: Immigration Immersion Mission Trip, Tucson AZ

## VISIONS OF ACTION

### Climate change strike

Edinburgh, Scotland; September



### Fighting climate change

Salem capital; November 21



### Emergency rally for Gaza

Portland; November 23



# NEWS, OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTION

## MFSA LAUNCHES RESOURCE GUIDE ON RACISM, IMMIGRATION, AND GUN VIOLENCE

Karen Nelson

For 2020, your conference Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA) leadership team has put together some suggested resources for churches and small groups to access. Our hope is that having a list of resources and ideas will make it easier to develop programs and explore issues and actions in which your small group or congregation might engage. We offer the schedule below as a possible way to move forward. The schedule for your church or small group may look different.



We have divided the year up into three topics. We will be notifying you by e-mail when these resources are available on our website. We hope to have the materials on racism available in early December.

- January – March: RACISM
- April – June: IMMIGRATION
- September – November: GUN VIOLENCE

## IMMIGRATION IMMERSION ♦ TUCSON ♦ MARCH 8-13, 2020

*Immigration at the U.S. southern border has become a human rights issue that can no longer be ignored. With so many reporting voices, it can be difficult to discern the real story and respond to growing concerns.*

Join a small group of concerned justice seekers to learn more about the border crisis, meet with agencies in the Tucson community working with immigrants, travel to Nogales to visit shelters and participate in hands-on experiences. Offered through Oregon-Idaho United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, Oregon-Idaho MFSA is participating as a co-sponsor.

Cost is \$750 which includes double-occupancy rooms at a local hotel, most meals, transportation in and around Tucson, honorariums and project/agency donations. It excludes the cost of travel to Tucson, Arizona.

To get more information and register, contact Louise Kienzle at [umvim@umoi.org](mailto:umvim@umoi.org). Space is limited!

### IMMIGRATION IMMERSION, TUCSON

March 8-13, 2020

Offered thru Oregon-Idaho United Methodist Volunteers in Mission, co-sponsored by Oregon-Idaho Methodist Federation for Social Action

Immigration at the U.S. southern border has become a human rights issue that can no longer be ignored. With so many reporting voices, it can be difficult to discern the real story and respond to growing concerns.

Learning more about migration and the crisis at the border from various perspectives, including:

- Immigration Detection Centers
- Justice For Our Neighbors (JFON)
- Border Patrol
- Coroner's Office reports

Meeting with several agencies surrounding the Tucson community working with immigrants to participate in hands-on experiences, which might include:

- The Inn at Tucson First UMC
- The Inn2America
- Humane Borders
- San Xavier Mission

Travel to Nogales in Sonora, Mexico, (passport required) looking at the economic and civil sectors of Nogales while visiting migrant shelters and services.

Transportation: Transportation will be available from the airport for individuals flying into Tucson. Expected arrival date is March 8 in the afternoon. Participants can expect the experience to conclude the afternoon of March 13.

**Cost: \$750.00**

Includes double-occupancy rooms with private bath at a local hotel, most meals, transportation in and around Tucson, honorariums and project/agency donations. It excludes the cost of travel to Tucson, Arizona. Single rooms are available upon request, and will incur an additional charge. Additional meals and expenses will be at the cost of the participant.

Contact Louise Kienzle for registration details.  
[umvim@umoi.org](mailto:umvim@umoi.org) • 541-620-0989(c) / 541-701-0511(h)



## UNITED METHODIST CHURCH: OPPOSING ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS SINCE 1976

Dee Poujade

As has been well publicized, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recently made a statement that the Administration no longer believes that the Israeli settlements in Palestine are "illegal." This pronouncement flies in the face of International Law, as well as long-standing United States Policy. It has been roundly condemned by the European

Union, the governments of many countries, many elected officials in the United States, and a number of church bodies, to name just a few.

Among those issuing statements opposing the move was United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR - <https://www.kairosresponse.org>), a grass-roots United Methodist organization founded in 2010 to respond to the Kairos Palestine Document. This document is an urgent plea from Christians in the Holy Land for decisive action in support of a just peace. It is a powerful call to churches around the world to go beyond merely talking about peace and take real steps to help bring a just peace to the people of Israel and Palestine.

Copies of the Kairos Document are available from members of the OR-ID Holy Land Task Force or on line (<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-ecumenical-bodies/kairos-palestine-document>). I encourage you to read more of the UMKR response on the Administration's statement.

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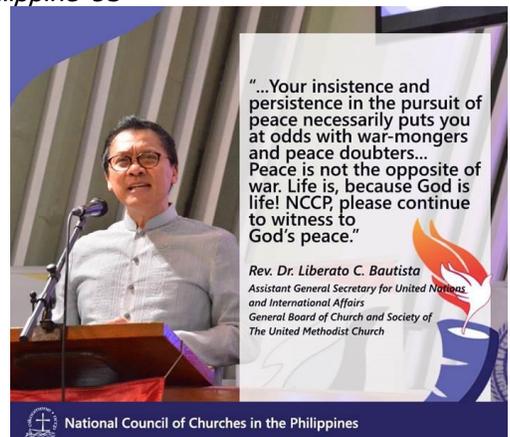
## SUPPORT FOR SUSPENSION OF AID TO PHILIPPINE MILITARY

*Drew Elizarde-Miller, International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippine-US*

The City of Portland Human Rights Commission is voting on a resolution calling for the suspension of aid to the Philippine military and police responsible for nearly 30,000 killings under Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte. As a part of Duterte's attacks on faith communities seeking peace and justice, the Duterte administration recently accused the National Council of Churches in the Philippines of being a communist front and terrorist organization. Come show your support for this historic resolution at 4 PM, Wednesday January 8th, at the Portland Human Rights Commission meeting 421 SW 6th Ave. 5th floor Portland, OR 97213.

Here is the link for the petition to the City Human Rights Commission we are requesting faith leaders to sign

onto: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScI3\\_UUGyZsNirXbNSBBPDOyvnJcna7ZjADPRIBOBMcA7xuTg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScI3_UUGyZsNirXbNSBBPDOyvnJcna7ZjADPRIBOBMcA7xuTg/viewform)



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## VISIT PALESTINE—THE UMC WAY!

*Dee Poujade*

The United Methodist Church PrimeTimers offers mission and volunteer opportunities for those ages 18 and older through Global Ministries and the Mission Volunteer offices. One of their 2020 offerings is a 11-day visit to the Holy Land, led by retired United Methodist Church Missionary Janet Lahr Lewis, who served as the Methodist Liaison to the Holy Land for almost 20 years.



The September 8-19, 2020, trip, which follows a similar itinerary to the one offered by the OR/ID Holy Land Task Force in 2016, will include visits to the traditional holy sites, including Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Sea of Galilee and Capernaum. There will also be opportunities for educational encounters with representatives of all three Abrahamic traditions, and a generous dose of Middle-Eastern hospitality.

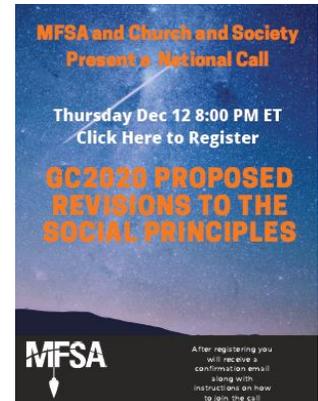
Cost is an all-inclusive \$3,850 per person, which covers airfare from Washington D.C., accommodations, meals, local transportation, entrance fees, licensed guide (tips included) and a contribution to work projects. Information about this and other PrimeTimers programs for 2020 is at <https://www.umcmmission.org/serve-with-us/additional-opportunities>. For additional information, contact the PrimeTimers office at [mv@umcmmission.org](mailto:mv@umcmmission.org), or Lahr-Lewis at [jlahrlewis2@gmail.com](mailto:jlahrlewis2@gmail.com).

## NEWS AND ACTION FROM NATIONAL MFSA

### MFSA NATIONAL CALL DECEMBER 12 ♦ SOCIAL PRINCIPLES

MFSA is planning to host conversations on several of our legislative priorities for General Conference. The first National Call conversation will be December 12 on the Revised Proposed Social Principles. Joining us will be Neal Christie from the General Board of Church and Society. Church and Society went through an extensive process to revise the Social Principles and have submitted them to General Conference. We are excited to have Neal join us. There will be an opportunity for questions. Please share this widely and invite all that are interested. [Register here](#).

Here is a link to the Proposed Revised Social Principles where you can read them before our conversation <https://www.umcjustice.org/who-we-are/social-principles-and-resolutions/revised-social-principles>.



### NATIONAL MFSA BOARD AND PROGRAM COUNCIL MEET FOR FALL MEETING

*Karen Nelson*

On November 16 and 17 the national MFSA board gathered in Minneapolis for its fall meeting. We began our meeting by creating a social covenant document that we will use to guide each of our meetings. On Monday, the Program Council affirmed using this same document. The document contains two sections: How we will live, serve, and love together; How we will be accountable for our differences.

Much of Saturday was spent working with a trainer from Crossroads, who will be leading us through a year-long racism audit. This orientation to the audit and to understanding that MFSA is a racist organization – that all institutions are racist organizations and live in the center of white supremacy – was a helpful start to this year-long process. An audit task force will be appointed, consisting of 50% board members and 50% other people. Our goal is to have a task force that is as diverse as possible. Task force members will be spending the next year working with Crossroads and the tools Crossroads will provide for us to determine where the racism exists in our organization and how to make difficult changes. The board has agreed that we will accept the recommendations of the task force and make the necessary changes at the end of the year.

A three-day training on the racism audit will take place in St. Petersburg, FL sometime between February 12 and 17, 2020. There is room for 45 people to attend this training. If you are part of a church or other faith-based organization that might be interested in this training, watch for details from the national office in the next few weeks.

Both the Board and Program Council (meeting Sunday and Monday) received a budget report and the proposed 2020 budget, as well as a report from Bridget Cabrera, our executive director. Our Oregon-Idaho chapter made a \$300 donation to the national budget and a challenge for other chapters to do the same. The East Ohio representative contacted his chapter and announced a \$375 donation on Monday. Way to go, chapters!

Sunday evening we hosted a dessert reception for local justice seeking United Methodists. We met a number of people and had great conversation and sharing of ideas.

Program Council Representatives also shared the things happening in their areas as well as the challenges for their chapters. I'll share more about those ideas in the next newsletter.

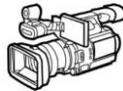
## NATIONAL MFSA UPDATES

Do you want to receive information and updates on justice issues from national MFSA, our parent organization? Be sure you are signed up to receive occasional updates by going to [www.mfsaweb.org](http://www.mfsaweb.org), scroll to the bottom of the homepage, and enter your information. Monthly updates on justice issues, seasonal devotional materials, and other information will soon come to your inbox.

## RESOURCES AND RESPONSES



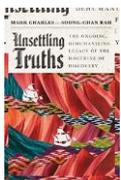
**BOOKS,**



**VIDEOS, MOVIES...**

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

*Below are a few titles that members of the MFSA Executive Committee have seen or been reading – please share your suggestions with newsletter editor Louise Kienzle at [kienzle.louise@gmail.com](mailto:kienzle.louise@gmail.com) for a future edition.*



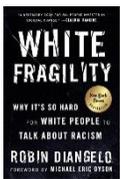
**Unsettling Truths**, by Mark Charles *(submitted by Claudia Roberts)*

The author is a Navajo minister and is a nationally known historian of the indigenous people of the United States. What he has found is shocking about how the Doctrine of Manifest Destiny was the foundation of the systematic racism that is still plaguing our country. Although it is uncomfortable reading, his research and insights will change your view of American history forever.



**The Nickel Boys**, by Colson Whitehead *(submitted by Dee Poujade)*

I loved Whitehead's *Underground Railroad*, which fictionalized a bit of Civil War history, and thought I would like this one, which (barely!) fictionalizes a boys' "reform school" in the middle of the last century. While I did like it, it was a much harder read than *Railroad*, mainly because the acts of brutality were so prevalent, and the "good" / likeable characters few and far between. The protagonist, Elwood (who I did like – very much!), is coming of age with the Civil Rights Movement – and he could have grown up to be another Elijah Cummings, had he not been unjustly charged with a crime and sent to a horrific juvenile detention center in Jim Crow Florida. From there, the story descends into a very dark look at the worst aspects of reform schools and segregation – and, sadly, it's based on a real place and incidents that really happened there! This book will outrage you – even as it makes you wonder how much has really changed. Recommended for adults and mature teens.



**White Fragility**, by Robin DiAngelo *(submitted by Dee Poujade)*

I think this book did an excellent job of describing what racism is and how white people exacerbate it – often unknowingly. The friend who loaned me her copy told me that I might be offended by some of the material in the book. I wasn't. But I did find this book very enlightening about how permeating racism is. I learned that racists aren't just the scary people in white hoods who terrorize Black communities – that we are all racist and that it's a product of conditioning from birth. In that respect, White Fragility is an excellent introduction to racism. Where it falls short, in my view, is in offering practical advice on "where do we go from here?" There's very little "practical" information on how to make it better – steps on how to make us less racist in our thoughts, words and deeds. The author does touch on relationship-building, but, if we're in a homogeneous group of "alike" people, where do we go to make the relationships that we can build on? While I would have appreciated some guidance in this area, I still recommend the book for what it does offer.

## WAKING UP & ME

Brenda Wills

Nancy Thurston's roots run deep in West Texas natural gas fields, yet she is committed to sustainable resources; she worked for fifteen years as a physical therapist but didn't fully land in her own body until middle age; she was born with white skin but lived decades before she realized her skin color had anything to do with race. Nancy lives in Portland, Oregon, but knows her neighborhood is global. Nautilus Silver Metal book, [\*Big Topics at Midnight: A Texas Girl Wakes Up to Race, Class Gender and Herself\*](#) is her first book.

Nancy's creative passion first intersected my life in 1978, when she and her husband Howard signed up to be leaders of the Senior High Youth at Boise First UMC, where I was Youth Pastor. I am more aware of my internalized racism and biases because of the written words and witness of my friend Nancy. I pray you too will be troubled, called to action and transformation by her words working on your soul. I offer you a couple of paragraphs of Nancy's work with links to her blog for your comfort and disturbance.

From [National Shadow and Me](#):

*One minute I'm holding my new grandson, delighted by his giggles, and the next minute I find myself nauseated by the latest morsel of news... I love this planet and country too much to continue to remain silent... My love requires me to fully step into my responsibility as a human being and a citizen, and to look directly into the nation's shadow, which also means looking directly into the ways this shadow has landed in me. Today. Not just in the past.*

*...Transformation requires that we live in alignment with our values right in the middle of this culture that is still riddled with injustice. Luckily, we don't have to do this alone or unequipped. This is a spiritual journey we can walk together, armed with transformative practices.*

*Read more about how I equipped myself for this journey – both through vibrant community and robust practices from [Wisdom & Money](#) and [Be Present, Inc.](#)*

I'm Nancy Ann Mathys Thurston, a woman who dives right into the middle of topics my father told me to avoid – money, race, religion, gender and politics.

[www.nancymthurston.com](http://www.nancymthurston.com)

Here are a couple of blogs where I've explored different aspects of waking up:

[Trusting Refrigerator Wisdom](#)

[White Supremacist](#)

[How then can we Hope?](#) – remembering the light when awakening to this darkness.

[White Privilege, Class Privilege, Gender Privilege](#) – about the complexity of privilege in this culture.

[National Shadow and Me](#)

[The Journey Toward Justice](#)



**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK**

If you are a Facebook user, be sure to like our page, "MFSA Oregon-Idaho Chapter". Also be sure to like the national page, "Methodist Federation for Social Action". Invite your friends to like us, too.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/482406915145776>

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## OREGON-IDAHO MFSA ON THE WEB



We are continuing to rebuild our website! You can still find us at [www.oimfsa.org](http://www.oimfsa.org) but please be patient as we learn the new system.

Our newsletter continues to be published electronically. If you have email access, please make sure we have your current email address. If you do not have email access and wish to continue receiving a paper copy please let us know.

Contact Oregon-Idaho Chapter MFSA, at [oregonidaho@mfsaweb.org](mailto:oregonidaho@mfsaweb.org) or P.O. Box 134, Salem OR 97308.

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