

JUNE, 2009 MFSA - IOWA CHAPTER MEMO

2009 Annual Conference:

A highlight of Annual Conference for more than 400 people was MFSA's Awards Event on Saturday, June 6. Awards were presented to Sol Varisco and Jeff Abbas for their outstanding work with immigrants following the raid at Postville in May 2008. In addition two churches, St. Bridget's Catholic Church in Postville and First United Methodist Church in Decorah were recognized for their tireless work in the community of Postville. A third award was given to Sharon Malheiro, who was instrumental in the case that ultimately led to the Supreme Court's decision on marriage equality (Carolyn Jenison accepted the award for Ms. Malheiro). The keynote speaker, the Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright, was received enthusiastically with frequent applause from the audience. His message was simple but powerful. To the award recipients and to MFSA he said, in essence, that our work fulfills scripture; it's not in vain and does make a difference, and it's not over. He called the recipients "prophets," and admonished all of us to keep on working.

The Constitutional Amendments didn't fare well over all. Those related to the World Wide Church were soundly defeated. All the other amendments passed, including the three MFSA opposed, but also including Amendment I, which states that all persons are eligible to attend worship, participate in programs, receive sacraments, and upon baptism, be admitted as members of the church. MFSA had strongly supported this amendment, and its passage is an important victory.

Other highlights of Conference were the Rainbow Communion Service, attended by well over 80 persons, and the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON).

United Methodists Do Not Torture:

Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) has designated June as "Torture Awareness Month." In conjunction with this observance the General Board of Church and Society has launched a campaign to collect signatures on a petition urging President Obama and the U. S. Congress to open an inquiry into whether persons should be held accountable for what have been termed "enhanced interrogations." The theme of the campaign is "The Truth Shall Set Us Free." The 2008 Book of Resolutions speaks clearly to this issue, "Our commitment to human rights is grounded in the conviction that each and every human life is sacred. Therefore the United Methodist Church endorses legislative and judicial remedies for the use of torture and illegal detention...such as the appointment of special counsels [and] appropriate investigations." #6120, 2008 Book of Resolutions. For more information or to sign the petition, go to: www.umbcs.org/UMsDoNotTorture.

Demonstration for Commission on Torture:

Thursday, **June 11, 5:00 – 6:00 PM** the Siouxland Peace Coalition will demonstrate at the Sioux City Federal Building, 6th and Douglas Sts., to urge the establishment of a Commission on Torture. The event is held in conjunction with a demonstration that day in front of the White House in D.C. by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture. Visit NRCAT.org. Come when you can. Make your own sign or use ours. (Sign making party, 4:00 PM at Clare House, 1918 Douglas St. in Sioux City.)

Mission Camp 2009:

This summer, the **Matthew 25 Ministry Hub** will offer an amazing learning opportunity to youth in 6th-12th grade. Our summer mission camps will not only give you a chance to help people who have experienced the worst natural disaster in Iowa's history, they will also be hands-on learning experiences. Youth will learn about how a community responds to a natural disaster and the unique role communities of faith have in disaster zones. We will also have time for team building and fun. These camps take place **July 5-10 and 12-17**. The cost is \$200 per person and groups must bring one adult for every 5 youth. Space is limited, so don't delay. Contact Matthew 25 at info@hub25.org for more information or call them at 319-362-2214 with questions. Don't miss this great opportunity!

Siouxland Peace Coalition:

The Siouxland Peace Coalition Meeting will be held on **Saturday, June 13, 10:00 -11:30** at Clare House, 1918 Douglas St. in Sioux City.

“Electronic Environmental Media” House Party:

Teens and adults are welcome to an “Electronic Environmental Media” house party, sponsored by the Sierra Club, at the home of Gerald Iversen, 3430 Concordia Dr., in Sioux City. The dates are Tuesday, **June 16th or Tuesday, July 14th**. Limit of eight per gathering. Reservations are required by the day before at: 712-274-2549 or: GeraldIversen@yahoo.com.

Siouxland Missouri River Clean Up:

The Siouxland Missouri River clean up will be held on Saturday, June 27th, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Contact Jim at: 712-258-8308.

Encountering Iran:

Karla Hansen and Ismael Hossein-zadeh will present an evening documenting their recent seven week stay in Iran on **Thursday, June 25th, 7:00 – 9:00 PM** in Meredith Hall, Drake University Campus in Des Moines.

Mark your Calendar!

MFSA’s Fall Statewide Gathering will be held on **Saturday, October 31st at Epworth UMC in Des Moines**. The program will focus on prison issues, as a follow up to the regional gatherings held last fall, “...For I Was in Prison.” Watch for details in the coming months.

Justice and Joy!

The 10th National Reconciling Convocation will be held at the **YMCA of the Rockies**, Estes Park, Colorado, **September 4 – 7, 2009**. For more information, go to www.rmnetwork.org/convo2009.asp.

Looking Ahead:

The Wisconsin Chapter of MFSA is sponsoring a retreat and workshop at Pine Lake Camp on the theme, “Worshipping God...Just for Us or for Justice,” **January 22-23, 2010**. Our own **Phil Carver** will be the workshop leader. For more information, contact Steve Zekoff at: szekoff@charter.net.

Check It Out!

MFSA’s web site, www.mfsaiowa.org, contains articles, links, actions to take and places to go. Check it out!

Please Send Information:

Friends, we would like to publicize **events around the state** that might be of interest to MFSA folk. Please send information about events in your area by the last week of each month for inclusion in the next month’s E-Mail Memo. Also, PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOUR ADDRESS CHANGES! You can contact me at: ecranke@mchsi.com

Questions about Membership?

Contact Mike Biklen at 515 East Eleventh St., Muscatine, IA 52761, or by phone at: 563-263-1439, or by e-mail at: wmbiklen@juno.com

Where to Send Your Membership Form and Contributions?

Please send to MFSA Treasurer: Brian Carter, 7218 El Rancho Ave., Windsor Heights, IA 50322.