



**2010 MFSA Spring Statewide Gathering**

**Jeffrey J. Weiss on AFGHANISTAN**

**Saturday, April 17 - 10 A.M.**

**Epworth United Methodist Church**

412 Euclid, Des Moines, Iowa 50313

**Jeffrey Weiss, Catholic Peace Ministry** keynote speaker

**Ruth Anne Petrak** devotions

**Lunch** by members of the Epworth UMC (free will donation)



✦ Jeffrey Weiss is Director of Catholic Peace Ministry (CPM), an ecumenical organization that works for peace and social justice. For ten years before taking the position with CPM, Jeffrey was Peace Education Director in the Iowa Office of the American Friends Service Committee. For the past ten years he has also been a part-time professor at Des Moines Area Community College, teaching Political Science and Sociology. His wife and three children are members of Holy Trinity Catholic Church. In college his master's thesis was titled, "How Media Report Political Dissent: A Content Analysis of the New York Times Coverage of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X." The past few years he has conducted workshops on many topics, including terrorism, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, and the state of mass media in the United States today.

**2010 Spring Regional Gatherings feature  
Kathleen McQuillen on Palestine/Israel**

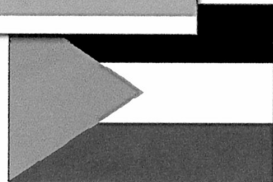
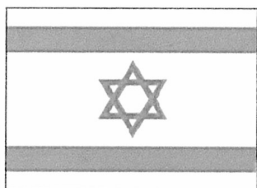
**onfire  
the young  
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justice movement**

"What we are  
Up Against is  
Separation"

Read the latest blogs  
describing the  
dividing walls in

Palestine and  
Nogales, Mexico at

[www.umonfire.blogspot.com](http://www.umonfire.blogspot.com)



MFSA's Spring Regional Gatherings will focus on Palestine/Israel, using new materials from the Presbyterian Church called *Steadfast Hope, the Palestinian Quest for Just Peace*. Kathleen McQuillen, Iowa Program Coordinator for the American Friends Service Committee, will be the resource person. (see intro to topic on page 2) The schedule of times and places follows. Find the one nearest you and join us:

Sunday, February 28	2:00 PM	Ames Collegiate UMC
Sunday, March 7	2:30 PM	Storm Lake UMC
Saturday, March 13	10:00 AM	Atlantic UMC
Sunday, April 25	3:00 PM	St. Luke's UMC, Dubuque
Saturday, May 1	10:00 AM	Fellowship UMC, Muscatine

**Civil Marriage Equality Advocates Continue Work**

One Iowa is the state's largest gay and lesbian advocacy organization, working to protect civil marriage equality for same-sex couples granted in last April's historic *Varnum v. Brien* ruling.

As we learned in California and Maine, the freedom to marry is never as secure as we hope. Opponents of equality in Iowa were quick to act after the court's decision, pushing for an arduous and divisive constitutional amendment, a fight that would play out over a number of years and pit neighbor against neighbor.

The Methodist Federation for Social Action was one of more than 70 Iowa organizations that recently signed on to a growing statewide coalition of groups opposed to a constitutional amendment. The organizations have a combined membership of over 150,000 Iowans and include labor, civil rights,

and faith groups.

Moving forward, advocates see challenges and opportunities. "We know there is a well-funded and organized opposition to the freedom to marry in Iowa. We're not going to take anything for granted," said One Iowa Executive Director Carolyn Jenison.

However, she sees progress being made. "Each time another couple gets married, their story is shared and celebrated by the community. Iowans respect their neighbors. I don't believe they'd be willing to deny them the protections and privileges of marriage."

More information can be found at [www.oneiowa.org](http://www.oneiowa.org)

Justin Uebelhor  
Director of Communications  
One Iowa



**oneiowa**

## Myths about Afghanistan

by Jeffrey J. Weiss

**Myth:** Our military uses strategic airstrikes in cooperation with the Afghans.

**Reality:** More than 2,000 Afghan civilians died in 2009 and Afghan President Hamid Karzai has gone public opposing U.S. bombings - 'airstrikes' is an Orwellian term. Unreported is the role of 100,000 private mercenaries in Afghanistan.

**Myth:** Government spending is 'out of control' so we can't spend on health care and education.

**Reality:** Consider that in the past eight years taxpayers have given five trillion dollars to the Pentagon, including one trillion for the wars and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. For every dollar the U.S. Congress allocates, fifty cents goes to the Pentagon!

**Myth:** Without Afghanistan, September 11 would not have taken place.

**Reality:** September 11 was planned in Europe, and 15 of the 19 hijackers were from Saudi Arabia. The main grievance for Bin Laden and his followers is the presence of U.S. military bases in the holy lands of Islam. Bin Laden continues to say both publicly and privately that the goal is to coax the U.S. military to chase them all over the globe in order to bleed the U.S. economy dry.

**Myth:** This battle is between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban.

**Reality:** The majority of Afghans live in rural mountainous areas, devoid of any institution providing services or security....Afghans are tired of war. They cannot find work that pays enough to survive, and they lack health care. Afghans are caught between foreign armies, the Taliban, and a corrupt government.

**Mr. Weiss will speak on this topic at the April 17 Statewide Gathering. Read more online at [www.mfsaiowa.org](http://www.mfsaiowa.org)**

### Chet Guinn Recommends Film

Demon, saint or something in between? Michael Moore is definitely something in between, but what? Drawing upon his cinematic skills and sense of humor he has tackled the most provocative issues of the day.

My conclusion: Michael Moore is a prophet, an Amos. He lowers the plumb line of righteousness to expose grave injustices in our midst. Of course, the gun lobby was offended by "Bowling Columbine", the insurance industry by "Sicko", the Washington insiders by "Fahrenheit 9/11 and Wall Street by "Capitalism: a Love Story". His truth hits raw nerves not unlike Amos' message to the Israelites.

I recommend that churches use "Capitalism, a Love Story" to launch a study of the current deep social pathology—the epidemic of self-serving materialism that tramples on the poor.

### From MFSA Coordinator Eloise Cranke:

To receive the monthly email memo, please send your e-mail address to me at: [ecranke@mchsi.com](mailto:ecranke@mchsi.com). Also, if your address changes, please send me your new address.

### Update from the

### Cedar Rapids

### Matthew 25 Ministry Hub

Much of our work here still focuses on rebuilding our community after the devastating flood of 2008. We have learned a lot about what a difference it makes to do this work with Christian faith as a foundation. Rather than despair, frustration, and a sense of scarcity, Matthew 25 works hard to offer hope, creative problem-solving, and a belief in God's abundance. The Block by Block Program ([www.blockbyblockcr.org](http://www.blockbyblockcr.org)), which we began last July with our partners (UM Flood Recovery Office and Affordable Housing Network), embodies these values in many wonderful ways by building deep community as we rebuild structures. To learn about other projects of the Matthew 25 Ministry Hub, check out our website: ([www.hub25.org](http://www.hub25.org)) or better yet, come visit us in person. We'd love to show you the neighborhood. -

by Rev. Courtney Ball - Co-Director, Matthew 25



### How U.S. Protection Emboldens Israel's Wars and Occupations-

by Kathleen McQuillen, AFSC

Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli war on Gaza at the close of the Bush administration, was timed in part we are told to avoid confrontation with the in coming Obama administration. Operation Cast Lead rained missiles, helicopter fire, tank shells and phosphorous on the open air Palestinian prison called Gaza from Dec. 28, 2008 to Jan. 18, 2009. At the end of the 3 weeks approximately 1400 Palestinians were dead, thousands wounded, and much of the infrastructure of the enclosed 25 square miles of land called Gaza lay in ruins. Israel lost 12 military personnel and one civilian.

It seems now the concerns of opposition from the Obama administration were unfounded. Israel's use of U.S. weapons to wage a war of aggression on the people of Gaza has not altered U.S. intent to continue the Bush administration agreement to provide \$3 billion in military aid to Israel in each of the next 10 years.

**Ms. McQuillen will speak on Israel/Palestine at the Spring Regional Gatherings. Read more online at [www.mfsaiowa.org](http://www.mfsaiowa.org)**

### Questions About MFSA Iowa Membership?

To renew, join, or check your membership, contact Mike Biklen - Phone: 563-263-1439  
515 East Eleventh St., Muscatine, IA 52761  
or e-mail: [wmbiklen@juno.com](mailto:wmbiklen@juno.com)

### Where to Send Your Membership?

Memberships and contributions should be sent to our treasurer Brian Carter,  
7218 El Rancho Ave., Windsor Heights, IA 50324.