Dear Friends,

The pandemic is still with us. But despite the pandemic summer comes. Flowers bloom; blue skies and sunny days are here. So in the midst of Zoom meetings and webinars, please find time to grab your mask and head for a large park where you can enjoy the beauty, “safely distancing,” of course. Or, if that’s not possible, look for some of nature’s beauty closer to home, and enjoy the gift of this lovely planet called “Earth!”

Joy and peace, Eloise

MFSA Fall Statewide Gathering – Saturday, October 24:
We are excited that the presenter for our Fall Statewide Gathering will be Bridget Cabrera, MFSA’s Executive Director! She will be leading the discussion on “Intersectional Justice,” a program in keeping with MFSA’s theme for 2020: “In the Midst of New Dimensions.” Social Action Awards will be announced at that time. They are Kathleen Clark and Barb Dinnen (posthumously). There will also be election of officers for 2021. At this point it looks likely that the Gathering will need to be held virtually, so watch for additional information in the months ahead as the plans develop.

75th Anniversary Observance:
This year marks the 75th anniversary of the dropping of the nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As part of the commemoration, the Japanese Bell at the State Capitol complex will be tolled 75 times beginning at 10:58 AM on Thursday, August 6th, the precise time the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Churches across the city are invited to ring their bells, or if bells are not available, a hand bell at that same time. To distinguish from tolling the hour, which some churches do, please ring the bell 15 times. Other activities include laying flowers at the base of the bell, either at the time it is being tolled, or at any time from then through August 9th. (Please wear a mask)
A 30-minute You Tube program will be available on August 9.

Calling All Youth Leaders! – August 8 Gathering
This ecumenical 4-hour virtual gathering will equip clergy, youth ministers and adult volunteers to more effectively partner with high school youth in their churches and communities as they grow into young adult faith leaders. It will be held on August 8th. Cost is $10. CEUs are available for IAUMC clergy. For more information and to register, please contact Eric Rucker at: eric.rucker@simpson.edu.

Iowa CURE Meets Sunday, August 9:
You are invited to join Iowa CURE (Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants) on Sunday, August 9, at 2:00 PM via Zoom. Featured guest will be Kristie Hirschman, Ombudsman for the prison system. Join Zoom Meeting at: https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78850491742?pwd=SURGUXZ1ZDUrZVh0TkFseTArY0YyUT09
Meeting ID: 788 5049 1742
Password: 8xG1TM
By telephone: Dial 1-312-626-6799 and follow the prompts to enter the meeting ID above (and perhaps the password). For more information, please contact Richard Nordin at: richardnordin@live.com.

Dingman Peace Award Dinner: (Now cancelled)
For more information, or questions about tickets or co-sponsorships, please contact Patti McKee at: 515-803-1152, or: catholicpeaceministry@gmail.com

Vote Safe!
The next General Election is November 3, and it’s easy to vote safe! You can now request an absentee ballot. Simply contact your county auditor.
Faith and Racial Equity: Exploring Power & Privilege:
This 8 well series is offered by the Center for Social Ministry as part of the Just Faith program. The first four weeks introduces a framework for understanding and recognizing racial disparities in power and privilege. Sessions 5 – 8 take a deeper dive into specific issues. Participants will explore how their faith should inform their response to their learning, as well as discern action steps for working toward racial equity in their own communities. Two different time frames are offered:

Option 1: Wednesday Evenings 6:30 – 8:30 PM, beginning July 29
Facilitators: Katie Wainwright and Faye Akers

Option 2: Monday Evenings 7:00 – 9:00 PM, beginning July 27
Facilitators: Patsy and Paul Carlson

Notes: Both options are online. The second session of each option is a retreat and is a longer class. It will be discussed at the first meeting.

For more information or to register, please go to: centerforsocialministry@gmail.com

1945 Timeline:

Double Your Support for Legislative Advocacy Ministries!
MFSA is offering to double your donation to the Legislative Advocacy Ministry up to $5,000! We want to show our support for the volunteer Advocacy Team who works on our behalf to influence legislation on which the United Methodist Church has taken a position. The Legislative Advocacy Team has undergone a change in its funding. (The Team is made up of volunteers who receive an honorarium for their time, and a consultant lobbyist who helps the team be more effective). The funding is part of the apportionments and comes out of the Board of Church and Society budget. Previously it came directly from Conference Council on Ministries. This year boards and agencies are being asked to spend only about half of their budgets because of low apportionment payments. A new fund has been set up to accept donations to the Legislative Advocacy Team to make up the difference, and because of the critical importance of this work, MFSA wants to help. So, send your check, made out to MFSA, with Legislative Advocacy Ministry in the Memo line, to Mike Biklen, 515 East Eleventh Street, Muscatine, IA 52761. MFSA will match your donation up to $5,000. Let's make our voices heard!

Support Needed:
The Iowa Sanctuary Movement (MFSA is a member) is helping to sponsor several asylum-seekers in the Des Moines Area, as well as to help DACA recipients and other immigrants impacted by ICE. Financial support is needed for all of those projects.

1.) Donations for asylum-seekers and DACA recipients can be made through First Unitarian Church, 1800 Bell Ave., Des Moines, 50315. (Indicate the project you are supporting on the memo line.).

2.) For families affected by Mt. Pleasant ICE raid, contact First Presbyterian Church, 902 S. Walnut St., Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641.

3.) For families in Des Moines separated by ICE, contact Walnut Hills UMC, 12321 Hickman Rd., Urbandale, IA 50323-1810.

4.) For bail funds contact Eastern Iowa Community Bond Project, PO Box 3174, Iowa City, IA 52244-3174.