Advent. A time of waiting, of preparation, of hope. This year more than ever before we are familiar with waiting. We wait for a vaccine and the end of the pandemic, for election results, for a return to some semblance of “normal.” And, as Christians, even in the midst of this chaotic world, we wait, once again, for the coming of the Christ Child, and the hope that was born that night so long ago. Hope may seem illusive at a time like this, but we can choose to be hopeful people. We can decide to keep hope alive, to act on that hope, to be partners with God in moving our weary world just a little closer to that day when God’s justice and peace will be a reality for all God’s children everywhere. May it be so!

Joy and peace to you this Advent season! Eloise

Lessons and Carols with SYA: Saturday, Dec. 5 – 6:30 PM
Simpson Youth Academy (SYA) offers a virtual Lessons and Carols experience on Zoom At 6:30, student reflections and conversation, followed by a beautiful service with readings from youth and music from Simpson student choirs. Invite friends and church members! Register for free tickets via email to SYA director Eric Rucker: eric.rucker@simpson.edu

Weeping for our Children – Feast of the Holy Innocents: Sunday, Dec. 27 – 7:00 PM
The Zoom link for this event will be posted to Des Moines Faith Committee for Peace Facebook.

Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools: Tuesday, Dec. 8 – 5:00 PM
A sub-title of this documentary is “Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline” – a film inspired by Dr. Monique Morris’ book of the same name. The screening will be followed by discussion, panelists, and a call to action. Zoom registration link: UMW Pushout Film Webinar

100% Clean Renewable Cities Webinar: Wednesday, December 2 – 5:00 PM
Hear from representatives of cities that have already made a commitment to 100% clean energy in this virtual program with Q&A. Des Moines is considering adoption of a 100%, 24/7 Clean and Renewable Energy resolution. Sponsored by the Des Moines Task Force on Sustainability and partner organizations. Registration required, email: kfoi@1000friendsofiowa.org / Facebook

Longest Night Virtual Worship Service: Monday, December 21 – 7:00 PM
On the longest night of the year RMN is holding a space for grief and loss, as well as mystery, possibility and the beauty of darkness. Details coming soon.

Intersectionality: Dismantling Racism Panel Discussion:
Part of an ongoing series sponsored by the Council of Bishops, GCORR, UMW and GBCS. This session, hosted by Erin Hawkins, features professors Rev. Dr. Traci West of Drew University and Dr. Miguel De La Torre of Iliff School of Theology and Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Society of Race, Ethnicity and Religion. Sean McRoberts recommends it as part of our ongoing work to confront racism within MFSA and the UMC. In reference to the speakers, he says, “their analysis is deep and their invitations challenging.” View the video at the UMC website.

Called to Climate Action with Iowa Interfaith Power and Light: Please Sign!
Iowa Interfaith Power and Light invites all persons of faith and conscience to sign the “2020 Called to Climate Action” statement. I IPL works on: clean energy, environmental equity, protect water, regenerative farming practices, among others. Sign as a concrete action to help realize these goals. Learn more and sign: Iowa IPL Uphold and Upheave Statement

MFSA Spring Gathering – Saturday, April 27, 2021
MFSA’s Spring Statewide Gathering will feature Matt Russell, Executive Director for Iowa Interfaith Power and Light. Watch for more details in the coming months.
Black Stories at Des Moines Art Center through January 17

Black Stories features a collection of artwork co-curated by Mitchell Squire and Jordan Weber. Take a virtual tour and submit a story: [https://www.desmoinesartcenter.org/exhibitions/black-stories](https://www.desmoinesartcenter.org/exhibitions/black-stories)

Ethnic Young Adult Internships Applications for Summer 2021:
The Ethnic Young Adult Internship (EYA) program offered by the General Board of Church and Society is accepting applications for the Summer Program, June 5-July 31. The program is for young justice seekers willing to unpack their faith and identity while working with an organization engaged in addressing social injustices. EYAs learn about the role of Church and Society at the United Nations by visiting its UN office, and also visit a UMC historical site. Applications due 3/1/2021. Contact Katie Monforte: kmonfortte@umjustice.org or 202-488-5650.

Support Urgently Needed:
The derecho and COVID 19 have hit immigrant and refugee communities disproportionally hard, and they often don’t have the ability to access assistance programs for basic needs. Thus the help offered by the Iowa Sanctuary Movement (MFSA is a member) is more important than ever. Financial support can be directed to these funds. (See especially #5.)

1) Asylum-seekers/ DACA recipients: First Unitarian Church, 1800 Bell Ave., Des Moines, 50315. (Indicate the project on the memo line)
2) Mt. Pleasant ICE raid: First Presbyterian Church, 902 S. Walnut St., Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641
4) Prairielands Freedom Fund (bail funds), PO Box 3174, Iowa City, IA 52244-3174.
5) Central Iowa Emergency Fund for undocumented immigrants affected by COVID-19
   AFSC, 4211 Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50312 AFSC Des Moines Facebook and Website

Children of Abraham:
These discussions are continuing virtually with some timely topics. Each Session will begin with a more structured interview of panelists, followed by the opportunity to talk with each other in large and small group formats. More information can be found at: [www.cofabraham.org](http://www.cofabraham.org).

Refugee Admissions at Historic Low: Contact Legislators!
Church World Service (CWS) shares an urgent concern about the number of refugees to be admitted in the coming year. The Administration has set the number at 15,000, the lowest level in U.S. history. In addition, it is harmfully restricting refugee arrivals based on limited categories of persecution and country of origin, meaning even fewer than 15,000 refugees will actually be resettled. CWS is calling on all people of faith who care about refugees to contact your legislators immediately, urging them to speak out in support of refugee resettlement at 95,000, which has been the U.S.’s goal for nearly four decades, and to expand the categories of refugees who can be welcomed.

Recurring events and announcements online at [MFSA Iowa’s Memo page](https://www.desmoinesartcenter.org/exhibitions/black-stories) @MFSAIowa on Facebook