



MFSA IOWA CHAPTER MEMO

Eloise Cranke, Iowa Chapter Coordinator www.mfsaiowa.org

OCTOBER, 2020

Greetings, Friends,

October has long been my favorite month of the year. I love the crisp air, the colors of the leaves and the beauty of the harvest season. This year, however, I'm struggling to find that carefree enjoyment. The pandemic is still with us; racial strife continues unresolved; and we face a contentious election that will shape our country's future for decades. As often happens for me, the words of a hymn come alive. Harry Emerson Fosdick's hymn, "God of Grace and God of Glory" (p. 577 in the hymnal) offers this prayer: "...Grant us wisdom, grant us courage for the facing of these days..." May it be so.

Joy and peace, *Eloise*

MFSA Fall Statewide Gathering:

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." The Gathering will be held virtually on **Saturday, October 24 from 9:30- 12:30**. Devotions will be led by members of **Simpson Youth Academy**. Social Action Awards will be presented to Kathleen Clark and Barb Dinnen (posthumously). There will also be election of officers for 2021.

Join the meeting on Zoom at this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89401684627?pwd=RVNtVFpueYzc5T0ZFc2JtLyttc1VMUT09>

Meeting ID: 894 0168 4627 / Passcode: 116252

Global Rights For Women Event:

MFSA member, Becky Bentzinger, invites MFSA folks to "join her virtual table" for this event on **Friday, October 2 at 12:00 Noon**. If that time doesn't work, there will be another showing on **October 6** airing from the Asia Pacific Region. GRW was founded by Cheryl Thomas, a human rights attorney who works for legal reform to protect women and girls from violence across the world. She is a graduate of Simpson College. Information about the event and the registration form can be found at:

<https://app.mobilecause.com/form/sPYsbw?vid=c0u1e>.

Becky would like to know how many will be at her table, so please register if you'd like to attend. Using this link also gives you a free ticket. Once you have registered, you'll receive a link to join the event.

21-Day Equity Challenge:

United Way of Central Iowa seeks 10,000 people to take the 21-Day Equity Challenge, saying "This Challenge is a powerful opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of how inequity and racism affect our lives and our community." It begins on **October 5 and ends on November 2**. You are invited to sign and participate individually in this important effort. Please go to this link for more information and a way to become involved. <https://www.unitedwaydm.org/equity-challenge>

"Shaping Peace Together:" Videos Now Available:

That was the theme of this year's observance of the **International Day of Peace**, held on **September 21st**, as designated by the United Nations. The Des Moines Faith Committee for Peace live streamed the event that day, featuring **artist Ted Lyddon Hatten** as he created an ephemeral art installation, while accompanied by **harpist, Kristin Maahs**. **Anna's** graceful dancing added to the visual effect. A video of the event, created by **Rodger Routh**, can be found at: <https://youtu.be/8A1PniSbcHc>
In addition, a video of responses from faith leaders (including our own Bishop Laurie) and others to the question, "How can we shape peace together in this time of pandemic, uprising and immense change?" can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkTI5nGW7CI> MFSA was one of the co-sponsors.



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Black Men Strong – Saturday, October 3

This event begins at 12:30 at Redmond Park in Cedar Rapids. There will be brief prayers and statement of purpose, then at 1:00 walk to the African American Museum, where guest speakers will be heard. At 2:00 the group will depart, inspired for action. The event is sponsored by Black Men of Cedar Rapids.

Faith & Racial Healing: Embracing Truth, Justice & Restoration:

This eight-week module will guide participants in telling the truth about the history of racism in the US, so that we might work toward reconciliation. The remaining session, **Session three**, meets on **Wednesday evenings** from 6:30 – 8:30, **beginning October 7**. The first meeting is a retreat, going from 5:30 – 9:30 PM. Facilitator is **Jeanie Smith**. Course number is: JMRHF2002. For more information, please contact: centerforsocialministry@gmail.com.

Beyond the Book:

This is a Center for Social Justice Ministries program to highlight both the important works of social justice literature and those who work to live the out. It will be held online on **Wednesday, October 7, 7:00 – 9:00 PM**. The featured book is ***Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You***, by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi. The featured organization is Harvey Harrison, Just Voices. Facilitator is Jamie Loggins-Evans. Course number is: CSMBBF2001. Registration is required at: <https://csm.coursestorm.com/course/beyond-the-book1#!>. For more information, please contact: centerforsocialministry@gmail.com.

Mark Your Calendar – Black Stories:

A new exhibit at the Des Moines Art Center, *Black Stories*, will feature a collection of artwork co-curated by local artists Mitchell Squire and Jordan Weber. This will be a chance to share their stories and reactions to the work. The exhibit will run **October 3 – January 17**. For more information about the exhibit, please go to: <https://www.desmoinesartcenter.org/exhibitions/black-stories>

No Justice; No Peace: - Friday, October 9

This event will be held on Friday, October 9 at 6:00 PM, at Union Grove Park in Des Moines.

Shattering Silence:

An event will be held on Sunday, October 18th, at 2:00 PM, sponsored by Faithful Voices for Racial Justice, calling attention to the symbolism of the Sculpture and pledging our solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. Stretching from the Shattering Silence sculpture to the center of Iowa justice, we seek to shatter the silence of many in our state and commit ourselves to the work of racial justice in all communities.

Volunteers Needed:

Iowa City DSA and Iowans for Immigrant Freedom are looking for volunteers to visit detainees at the Hardin County jail in Eldora, IA. Hardin Co. is one of the many Iowa jails that has a contract with ICE to house people on immigration charges. People being detained at Hardin Co. jail are not doing well and are often so isolated that these visits are their only connection to the outside. Each volunteer can only visit 1 person per day, for 20 min, which is why they need a lot of people to volunteer. Volunteers will be trained and conversational Spanish skills helpful but are not necessary. Anyone interested can email freedomforimmigrantsei@gmail.com.



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Invest in MFSA's Anti-racist Work!

We at MFSA, both locally and nationally, have engaged in serious dialogue, training, and holy confession over the past several years around systemic racism operating in our governance and organization. We have named this as a priority for ourselves and know that we have work to do. The national MFSA organization began that work this year by engaging CrossRoads Anti-Racism Organizing & Training. As a regional community, we can support anti-racist work in many ways. One of the most important ways to show our support is through giving of our financial resources. At the national level MFSA has invested \$25,000 in this consulting process to begin to dismantling racist systems, policies, and practices within our organization. You can make your own investment in anti-racist work by giving to MFSA's anti-racist work. We believe in this vital work enough that for a limited time we are matching donations up to \$1,000. To make your donation, you can visit mfsaiowa.org or mail a check to Mike Biklen, 515 East Eleventh Street, Muscatine, IA 52761. Please designate your gift for anti-racist ministry

Support Urgently Needed:

The derecho and COVID 19 have hit immigrant and refugee communities disproportionately 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) 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.
- 5) A Central Iowa Emergency Fund has been set up for undocumented immigrants affected by COVID 19 (who cannot qualify for government relief). Contributions to this fund can be sent to AFSC, 4211 Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50312, designated for emergency relief for immigrants.

Please Send Information:

We want 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 the next month's E-Mail Memo. 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@hotmail.com. Contributions can also be sent to Mike.