



The Methodist Federation for
Social Action, Iowa Chapter
SOCIAL QUESTIONS BULLETIN

SQB

Seeking Global Justice through the United Methodist Church
SPRING 2021

www.mfsaiowa.org

MFSA Iowa Spring Statewide Gathering Saturday, April 24 – 9:30AM

Gathering virtually via Zoom

Zoom link will be posted online and in our memos



IOWA INTERFAITH POWER & LIGHT

From Climate Change to Climate Action

**Matt Russell, Executive Director
Iowa Interfaith Power & Light**

Faith and the shared values of faith traditions are critical to solving the climate crisis. We have to move away from the politics of division and into an identity politics of action. We are called to climate action by the values we share across faith traditions.

Matt will set up and lead a conversation about how Iowans of faith are critical to advancing solutions to the climate crisis by shifting our vision from one of scarcity and fear into a hopeful vision of abundance and action.

**SIMPSON
YOUTH
ACADEMY**

**Simpson Youth Academy
leads devotions before
Matt Russell's keynote**



Our speaker: Matt Russell (he, him, his) Matt's entire career has been advocating for social justice—the first 11 years training for and working in ministry, 16 years' secular work focused on economic and environmental sustainability, and leading Iowa IPL since April 2018. He studied for priesthood with the Catholic Diocese of Des Moines, earned an M.S. in Rural Sociology from Iowa State University, worked at the Drake University Agricultural Law Center, and served on the USDA Iowa Farm Service Agency State Committee.

Matt is a fifth generation Iowa farmer. He and his husband Patrick Standley operate Coyote Run Farm near Lacona. They raise fresh produce, heirloom tomato plants, and grass-finished beef. They have used many USDA and state programs to implement environmentally friendly agricultural practices and are developing a plan for carbon farming.



Read about Iowa Interfaith Power and Light's Faith-Farm-Climate efforts. *"We're seeing a dramatic increase in the number of Iowans, motivated by their faith, calling for climate action. Increasingly farmers are among the Iowans ready and willing to help provide solutions to this global crisis."*

<https://iowaipl.org/faith-farm-climate/>

Bravo Legislative Advocacy Team and Supporters!

Iowa MFSA Executive Committee and many of us were baffled by the public disclaimer in the form of a late January Conference-wide communique disavowing a Legislative Advocacy position favoring Iowa's Inheritance Tax. Although on the books for decades, that law is on the proverbial chopping block in a demonstration of white privilege and political power. Many wealthy farmers object to it, frankly most taxes. Brian Carter spoke truth to power in advocating for the common good represented in the tax as partial recompense for infrastructure and price supports existing through government programs funded by all taxpayers, rich/poor, farm/urban. Broadly shared wealth is a Biblical and Wesleyan good, as he noted.

[\(News article in Iowa Torch.com\)](#)

Many Iowans celebrate Century Farms passed down through generations as examples of land stewardship. Families include farmland in untaxed estates, passing wealth to children whereas childless landowners are taxed if they designate nonfamily to receive theirs. Unjust? On the surface it appears so, although Americans by and large accept/understand capital gains. As corporate interests take over more and more land, water, air and mineral rights including CAFOs (see page 2) and entire market chains from plow to packaged supermarket bacon (vertical monopoly), there is increased pressure to maximize profits. Taxes disrupt maximized profits in short term thinking, but are necessary, nonetheless.

- **MFSA Iowa Chapter Coordinator:**
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- Visit mfsaiowa.org for SQB archives, monthly events memo and more.
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LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY



As Lenten people, we remember the serpent Moses lifted in the wilderness, symbolic of violence ungrateful wanderers both experienced... and its cure. We too, are called to focus carefully on violence plaguing us: racism, sexism, climate change, plutocracy, hatred and fear of difference. Intersectionality is on display as we long for/work toward antiracist, just, liberated and democratic kin-dom, a common good with lands held as sacred trusts to be tended for future generations.

Let us all pray for and work toward the best cooperative visions laid out in our Social Principles and Resolutions, even as we celebrate faithful advocacy on our behalf by the Legislative Team. Bravo Brian, LAT, and Bishop Haller in her apology, renewed focus on positive proactive communication with our Team on the Hill and true dialogue with those with whom we find ourselves at loggerheads.

**Shalom,
Dave Shogren, Editor**

Get updates on legislative action on Facebook at IAUMC Advocacy
www.facebook.com/IAUMCAdvocacy

Stop New Animal Confinements

By Dale Hanaman

Although it did not advance, a Senate bill placing a moratorium on future confinement construction in Iowa was submitted. If passed it would (1) halt the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from approving applications for permits to construct new structure; (2) mandate an interim committee to study methods to increase public participation in approving and constructing such confinements; (3) report these findings to appropriate committees. Concerned citizens should voice opposition to further confinements with Iowa state legislators. A 2019 John Hopkins University survey, quoted by bill sponsors, found 63% of Iowans polled thought it was important for the state legislature to ban construction of new and expanded CAFOs, as reported in the [Des Moines Register](#).

Millions of hogs are raised, slaughtered and sold in Iowa annually: the USDA reports 23.5 million hogs in Iowa in 2018. Yet there are fewer farms, from 169,776 Iowa farms raising hogs in 1945 to 17,243 in 1997. Hogs raised in confinements have risen dramatically with more than 80% of hogs for slaughter coming from farms with more than 1,000 animals. (See USDA Iowa rankings for 2019: www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Iowa/Publications/Rankings/IA-2019-Rankings.pdf)

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) are facilities that produce more than a thousand animal units (1,000 cattle or 2,500 swine.)

CAFOs house animals inside more than 45 days a year. Most never experience terra firma given their concrete confinements and direct shipment to market. CAFOs are regulated per EPA's Clean Water Act, but states regulate CAFO operations independently.

Strict manure management plans are required for confinements in excess of 2,500+ hogs which can produce upwards of one million gallons manure/year, more fecal waste than many cities. CAFO manure falls through flooring into huge holding tanks to be spread as crop fertilizer. E. coli, MSRA, antibiotics and animal growth hormones are often present, contributing to possible stream/well pollution and antibiotic resistant bacteria. Increased respiratory issues such as bronchitis and asthma-like symptoms affect many CAFO workers and nearby residents.

Many (at least 3,745 according to Iowa DNR) smaller CAFOs do not need manure management plans OR construction permits. The Manure Management Master Matrix for confinements of 5,000 or more established by our state legislature in 2002 has not been updated to address these slightly smaller CAFOs or parameters set two decades ago. A moratorium is overdue until a full report can be presented. Iowans deserve transparency in confinement approval processes and for objections to be heard. Farm, land, water, air and animal resources are important to all Iowans. Because all Iowa citizens are affected by CAFOs and CAFO management, all have a stake in these inputs and outcomes.

MFSA Iowa Membership and Support:

Membership includes membership with National MFSA & SQB newsletter subscription. To join, contact membership secretary Mike Biklen. Please support MFSA Iowa through any or all of these three funds:

- **Organizer Fund:** Support our coordinator Eloise Cranke
 - **Legislative Advocacy Match: \$570 remains**
 - **General Fund:** operating budget expenses
 - **Memorial Fund:** Gifts given /designated
- Donate by mailing a check to MFSA Iowa
c/o Mike Biklen 515 E. 11th St., Muscatine, IA 52761-3920
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