



# MFSA IOWA CHAPTER MEMO

Ryan Russell and Medea Sanders. Interim Co-Coordinators

[www.mfsaiowa.org](http://www.mfsaiowa.org)

***“You cannot dismantle what you cannot see.  
You cannot challenge what you do not understand.”***

-Layla F. Saad, author, *me and white supremacy*

## February Events

**February 3: Virtual & in-person** – Intersections luncheon, Groundswell Café, Cedar Rapids, 11:45-1:00.  
**“Meatpacking America: What Research in Churches and Packing Plants Can Teach About Immigration in Our State and Nation.”** Featured speaker: Kristy Nabhan-Warren, Professor of Religion, University of Iowa. To register, go to [interfaithallianceiowa.org](http://interfaithallianceiowa.org)

**February 3:** Virtual – Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice First Friday Presentation. Noon. [iowammj.org](http://iowammj.org)



**February 4:**  
**I'll Make a World in Iowa,**  
**25<sup>th</sup> Annual Iowa African American**  
**Festival** [www.worldiniowa.org](http://www.worldiniowa.org)  
**Horizon Events Center, Clive**

**February 17: Virtual & in-person - Crossroads**  
Plymouth UCC, Des Moines, 11:45-1:00.  
**“Achieving Equity in Public Schools.”** Featured speaker:  
Teree Caldwell Johnson, President, Des Moines School Board. To register, go to [interfaithallianceiowa.org](http://interfaithallianceiowa.org)



**February 19: In-person** – **“Lift Every Voice and Sing: Sharing Our Song”** 3:00 p.m., Plymouth UCC, Des Moines. Choirs from Corinthian Baptist and Plymouth join together in a 90-minute musical presentation.

## ***So.....What's Going On With Iowa MFSA?***

As announced, MFSA coordinator Maria Van Der Maaten resigned from her position on January 15. Until we hire a new coordinator, two of Iowa MFSA's Executive Committee members, Ryan Russell and Medea Saunders, have agreed to serve as interim co-coordinators.

The Chapter went through a strategic planning session in August 2022 and looks forward to making our “action plan” come to life. The plan includes several revisions in the way we function, as well as developing some new and different ideas regarding membership campaigns and communications with existing and new members.

**Watch this space for updates, the actual job posting, and application process!** If you, or some other justice seeker you know, might be interested in a 10 hours/month non-profit job, please consider employment as Iowa MFSA Chapter Coordinator.

**Membership & Contributions:** Membership forms, questions, and contributions can be sent to:

Ryan Russell – 1301 E. College St. – Iowa City, IA 52240

Forms are linked on the [mfsaiowa.org](http://mfsaiowa.org) website About page [www.mfsaiowa.org/about](http://www.mfsaiowa.org/about)

*Note: the PayPal donation option is temporarily unavailable.*



# MFSA IOWA CHAPTER MEMO

Ryan Russell and Medea Sanders. Interim Co-Coordinator

[www.mfsaiowa.org](http://www.mfsaiowa.org)

## Legislative Advocacy

Unfortunately, there is no Conference Legislative Advocacy Team at present. As you watch Iowa legislation being crafted, please weigh-in with your legislators using the perspective of a person of faith and conscience. Members of last year's Advocacy Team and MFSA have been in conversation with the Conference, as we believe this very important ministry needs to continue.

In the meantime, the Iowa legislature's website is user friendly. Find your legislators, bills, debate schedule, lobbyist declarations, etc. at [legis.iowa.gov](http://legis.iowa.gov) For the United Methodist position on particular issues, access the *Social Principles of the United Methodist Church* at [umc.org](http://umc.org) (under What We Believe). Or, purchase a booklet with the *Principles*, which also includes discussion questions & activities from [Cokesbury.com](http://Cokesbury.com)



Iowa MFSA is a coalition partner with Moral Mondays Iowa (MMI). These sessions provide information on bills that are focused on equality, fairness, and justice. Moral Mondays IOWA MEETS EVERY MONDAY from noon-12:45 pm in Room 305 of the Iowa Statehouse during the 2023 Legislative session. Watch for updates on [MMI Facebook](#).

Iowa Interfaith Power and Light ([iowaipl.org](http://iowaipl.org)) is the source for environmental issues.

-----

***“Create the change the world needs by creating change within yourself.”***

*-Layla F. Saad, author, me and white supremacy*

## *Justice Seekers Resources for Dismantling Racism*



The Chicago Teachers Union recently commissioned [RAYGUN](#) to print a t-shirt that reads:

*January & February & March & April & May & June & July & August & September & October & November & December.*  
**Black History Months**

Are we, as justice seekers, doing our part to dismantle racism in our churches and communities? If you're finding yourself uncomfortable when you read that question, February is a good time to act. Our suggestions include:

### ***Small group studies for your congregation/circuit:***

• **Faithful Voices for Racial Justice**, a group functioning within Interfaith Alliance of Iowa, (one of Iowa MFSA's coalition partners), has many resources, including printed essays and a video series of faith leaders discussing segments of the *1619 Project*. The website [faithful-voices.org](http://faithful-voices.org) has info. about this project, as well as resources for Sunday School teachers/youth group leaders/parents on talking with children & youth about race. The website has book lists, etc.

- **Just Faith:** The mission of JustFaith Ministries is to create "transformative programs that inspire action to address the root causes of injustice while serving with love." Review their references at [justfaith.org](http://justfaith.org)
- **Books:** There are so many excellent anti-racism books. Many members of the Iowa MFSA Executive Committee have participated in book studies using: ***Stamped***, and ***How to Be an Antiracist*** by Ibram X. Kendi; ***Caste*** by Isabel Wilkerson; ***Me and White Supremacy: A 28-Day Challenge to Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*** by Layla F. Saad; ***The Sum of Us*** by Heather McGhee; ***White Fragility*** by Robin Diangelo; and ***Raising White Kids*** by Drake professor, Dr. Jennifer Harvey. One needn't be an expert to facilitate a book study.
- **Lenten Study:** *Lent of Liberation: Confronting the Legacy of American Slavery*, by Cheri L. Mills.

### ***Mission "learning trips":***

- Rather than planning a work trip with your youth (or adults) consider a civil rights "learning" trip to Memphis, Tulsa, Selma, Montgomery, Birmingham.....(each of these cities would probably be able to find you some "work" opportunities as well.)
- **Freedom Bus Tour** – 5-day bus trip in November 2023 lead by Rev. Abraham Funchess, pastor of Jubilee UMC in Waterloo, and director of the City of Waterloo Human Rights Commission. Information to register is on the City of Waterloo Human Rights page: [Freedom Bus Tour 2023](#)