

MFSA Iowa Fall Gathering
Saturday, October 24 – 9:45 am
KEYNOTE ADDRESS

“Intersectionality”

Bridget Cabrera, M.Div.
MFSA Executive Director



MFSA’s Executive Committee voted overwhelmingly to call a virtual Fall Gathering.

Technical support has been offered so that attendees will have details in ample time to fully participate.

Learn the origins and significance of intersectionality to the pandemic and the focus on systemic racism today. Listen to talks by Kimberlé Crenshaw, who developed the concept.

The urgency of intersectionality | TEDTalk
Kimberlé Crenshaw



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akOe5-UsQ2o>

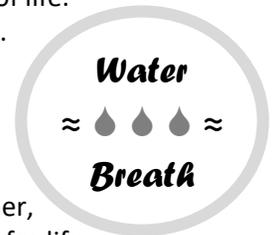
Do we honestly, truly, want to be well?

By Rev. Anna Blaedel
Excerpt from Anna’s blog
Moments for Common Nourishment
<https://enfleshed.com/blogs/mfcn/>

When it feels like the world is ending...
When grief is raw, and pain is pressing...
When the too muchness of sorrow fills the space within and around and between...
When I don’t know where or how to begin the practice of meeting life as it is...

I have learned to do two things: drink water, and breathe.

Everything else begins here. Drink water. Breathe. The most basic necessities of life. Drink water. Breathe. How life is sustained. How prayer begins. Water is Life. Breath is Spirit. *Ruach. Pneuma.* The origins of life. The beginning of all that is possible. Water. Breath.



To offer another water is a holy and lifesaving act of hospitality.
To breathe together is to be together, to literally *conspire* together in life, for life.

When we hear someone cry “I can’t breathe!” we bear an urgent and vital responsibility to allow absolutely nothing, nothing, nothing to continue as it is until we have figured out how to restore breath.

It is the cruelest kind of irony, that as a viral pandemic rages, and as our collective attention is fixated on respirators and ventilators and the vital necessity of breath, another Black beloved is murdered, crucified, while crying “I can’t breathe!”....

The truth is, more than one pandemic is raging.... And, the truth is, it is hard to breathe, in and through these truths. And, the truth is, those of us who are white have an urgent responsibility to sit with, and face, and confront these truths. They are truths white people must confront, and tell, and disrupt, and unlearn, and undo. They are truths only white people have the privilege to ignore.

Read more at enfleshed.com

Covid Connections

by Dave Shogren, SQB Editor

This year has brought perhaps the most radical shift in multinational lifestyles since World War II as Covid-19, a novel coronavirus, erupted in Wuhan, China, population 11 million. The pandemic spread quickly and pervasively. Hospitals were overwhelmed in Italy and New York City, hot epicenters with staffs stretched, protective equipment rare and thousands dead. Nations declared quarantine at varying rates as borders closed, mass transit stopped and economies crashed. Unemployment exploded with millions becoming food insecure. The USA provided emergency provision but big corporations and the rich always seem to receive lion's shares of benefits.

The global imperative was to "flatten the curve," slow exponential growth by sheltering in place so as not overwhelm hospitals and allow time to develop vaccines. The goal is "herd immunity" through vaccinations in affordable quantities, immunizing a majority when added to Covid-19 survivors hoped to have acquired antibodies preventing reinfection.

The church adapted as social gatherings became taboo. Concerts, sporting events, political rallies, mass transit and traditional worship in churches, temples and mosques were all eliminated out of fear, concern for the most vulnerable (elderly, persons of color, the poor or those with underlying conditions), and state mandate. Schools, colleges, churches, businesses, media; all were forced to work and socialize from a distance, in a new world of online platforms such as Zoom and FaceTime.

The dilemma facing the world until herd immunity is achieved is how to open economies/societies to minimize economic collapse, poverty and potential uprisings given an "acceptable" spike in mortality, especially of the most vulnerable (Darwinism).

The dilemma facing MFSA and the church at large pits the survival of institutions, even those working for justice, against the risk of death for individuals as the human need for personal social contact eventually comes to the fore. What does justice mean in this trying time?

MFSA's Organizing Principle (see page 4) applies here. In a sense Covid-19 has provided a unique perspective of "blest be tie that binds our hearts in Christian love." We have the opportunity in relative isolation to reflect on our mutual needs, wants and dreams, to realize more fully that we are all building blocks, all members of a common body, all united in love and bestowed with dignity by God's grace. Many celebrated Holy Week and Easter in physical isolation from believers, a first as we worshipped together apart, boundary free via Internet.

Where are you most keenly feeling/yearning for a new day of justice and holy social action?

The possibilities are many:

Racism fueled by hate, irrational fear, too many guns, police power abuse and vigilantism flood the national consciousness, violence taking Black lives needlessly and murderously. The police murder in Minneapolis of George Floyd igniting rigorous calls for justice, massive protest and chants of "I can't breathe!" The rage continues.

The **inequality of suffering** as the virus is most deadly among the impoverished and persons of color. Native Americans on reservations with inadequate food, water and health care suffer from obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, respiratory issues; underlying conditions associated with Covid-19 mortality.

COVID CONNECTIONS, *continued*

The plight of “**Essential workers**” often treated as expendable slaves in packing plants, as first responders, field workers, in food service, hospitals, delivery services, truck drivers, fire fighters, police, sailors at sea; all put in harm’s way. Many receive minimum wage and are threatened with job loss, even if risks are high for workers and their families. Many find it impossible to access unemployment claims as the system is overwhelmed with unprecedented numbers of desperate applicants. Immigrants are especially vulnerable to threats of deportation, thus fearful of protesting unsafe or illegal conditions.

Economic injustice that even as stocks are bolstered, too many small businesses fail. Federal government has not developed comprehensive plans to protect citizens from disease and economic ruin, forcing states to compete for supplies and how to manage reopening. This all leads to predictably uneven results and likelihood of spikes in infections and deaths.

The **allure of myths and conspiracy theories** challenging science and reason. Too many are questioning institutions, expertise, truth and the need to cooperate for the common good. Armed protesters invade capitols demanding early opening economies no matter the cost in lives. It is ironic that the very churches that deny full human rights to LGBTQA persons, most vocal in claiming “prolife” political positions, are all too willing to risk the lives of those they minister to in the name of financial and institutional viability.



This is not an exhaustive list but is adequate to give pause and move us to despair or prayer. Many feel overwhelmed in isolation by constant television news and social media. As persons of faith, let us gravitate toward prayer, spiritual discipline and social responsibility as the state opens and racism flares. Reach out to one another with calls, cards and letters of encouragement and guidance. Advocate with leaders in government and church for justice and compassion, truth and love. Read. Meditate. Laugh with those who laugh and grieve with those who grieve. Protest injustice safely. Sleep and eat well. Exercise body, mind and soul. Set measurable goals for personal growth including social advocacy. File your taxes/census. Research candidates. Vote. Give if you are able. Pray... even with fasting.

Count your blessings. (One of mine is the safe arrival of grandson, Rory Dylan Shogren, born at home in San Diego in the midst of pandemic on April 25.) I extend my blessings to all as we endeavor to stay well and anticipate a joyful (virtual) fall gathering, **God willing. Shalom.**

MFSA Iowa Membership and Support:

Membership includes National MFSA & SQB newsletter subscription. To join, contact our membership secretary Mike Biklen.

No dues are required, but any gift is greatly appreciated. 80% of your membership donation goes to fund the work of National MFSA.

Please support MFSA Iowa financially through any or all of these funds:

- **Organizer Fund:** Supports the work of our coordinator Eloise Cranke.
- **General Fund:** operating budget expenses.
- **Legislative Advocacy Match:** MFSA will match up to \$5,000 for Iowa’s advocacy team.
- **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 or via PayPal at mfsaiowa.org.

MFSA Iowa Chapter Coordinator:
Eloise Cranke ecranke@mchsi.com

Visit mfsaiowa.org for SQB archives, more [Facebook.com/MFSAIowa/](https://www.facebook.com/MFSAIowa/) like us and get the latest events and news

National MFSA Website
<http://mfsaweb.org/>

MFSA Intersectional Organizing Principle

“Injustice
anywhere is a
threat to justice
everywhere. . .”

Rev. Dr. Martin
Luther King, Jr.

All experiences of marginalization and injustice are interconnected because the struggle for justice is tied to concepts of power and privilege. Intersectional organizing recognizes that injustice works on multiple and simultaneous levels. Practical intersectional organizing always focuses on collaboration and relationship building. Experiences of injustice do not happen in a vacuum; therefore, it is imperative to:

- Develop the most effective strategies to create space for understanding privilege
- Organize in an intersectional framework led by marginalized communities
- Build effective systems of resistance and cooperation to take action for justice.

Join the Virtual POOR PEOPLE’S CAMPAIGN Moral March on Washington-June 20, 2020

The Mass Poor People’s Assembly & Moral March on Washington is going digital! On June 20, 2020, the largest digital and social media gathering of poor and low-wealth people, moral and religious leaders, advocates, and people of conscience in this nation’s history will be held.

Join this historical event – RSVP today:

June2020.org

poorpeoplescampaign.org

A global pandemic is exposing the already existing crisis of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the war economy and militarism.

On June 20, the 140 million poor and low-income people across this nation will be heard!

- The U.S. poor include 24 Million blacks, 38 M Latinos, 8M Asian Americans, 2M Native peoples, and 66M whites.
- One third of Covid-19 deaths are black persons
- Rev. William Barber of the Poor People’s Campaign said: “This pandemic will highlight how poverty—and our willingness to let people remain in it—presents a clear and present danger to all of us.”
- Dr. Cornell West added: “America has become a failed social experiment. . . that is unable to meet the basic needs of its people.”
- 60% more Americans live below the poverty line than in 1968.

Poor People’s Campaign

A NATIONAL CALL for MORAL REVIVAL

**MASS POOR PEOPLE’S ASSEMBLY
& MORAL MARCH ON WASHINGTON
IS GOING DIGITAL**

- 43% of all U.S. children live below the minimum income level necessary to meet basic need.
- Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, co-chair of the Poor People’s Campaign has said: “We need to reshape the heart and conscience of this nation, starting from the ground up. . . This crisis shows us how an economy oriented around the whims of the rich leaves death and destruction in its wake.
- When white people with weapons protest in state Capitols, the police stand by; when black unarmed people protest the murder of a black man by white police, the police retaliate with tear gas and rubber bulletins (Minneapolis).

The National Executive Board of MFSA met May 27 and declared two priorities for MFSA across the U.S.:

- (1) Support of the Poor People’s Campaign, and
 - (2) Opposition to Racism in all its forms.
- MFSA sponsors the PPC along with United Methodist Women and the Board of Church and Society.

*Article by the Rev. Brian Carter (retired),
Legislative Advocate for Iowa Annual Conference*