

ANNUAL REPORT

2016-17





June 22, 2017

Dear Friends,

This has been a year of changes and challenges, opportunities to make new friends and start new programs, and to bring our existing programs to new audiences.

We are delighted to announce that, after five wonderful years as an incubator project of Madison-Area Urban Ministry, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice this spring has become an independent 501c3 non-profit organization! From now on, all dues and donations can be made directly to WFVJ and are tax-deductible.

As an all-volunteer organization, we could not have accomplished what we have without the help and support of many friends, volunteers, and allies. We most especially want to thank:

Madison-Area Urban Ministry for being a warm and supportive incubator and to **Linda Ketcham** for all your help and advice!

Our wonderful **Board of Directors!** (find the list on p.8)

To the **South West Association United Church of Christ** and **Howard and Pam Erlanger** for your financial support!

To **Cassie Frankel** who interned with us this year. Cassie's work focused on building a database of potential funding sources; representing WFVJ to the Medicaid Matters Coalition; and staffing our advocacy events and actions.

And to the following congregations for hosting our advocacy workshop, Moving from Charity to Justice:

First Baptist Church and **Plymouth United Church of Christ**

I am very grateful for all your commitment, support, and passion for our work!!

Bonnie

Rabbi Bonnie Margulis
President of the Board

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ECONOMIC JUSTICE



The Dignity at Work Coalition is entering its third year of collective advocacy for policies that promote sustainable work that allows for sustaining families. Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice is the backbone organization that supports this work, along with the member organizations on our Steering Committee – 4-C, 9to5 Wisconsin, Dane County NAACP, the Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice, the Wisconsin Alliance for Women’s Health, the Wisconsin Coalition for Retirement Security, the Wisconsin Council of Churches, Wisconsin Jobs Now.

Over the past year, the Dignity at Work Coalition has educated its member and supporting organizations on issues affecting the childcare industry and low-income childcare workers; the challenges facing retirees who have little or no pension or retirement savings; and the damaging policies to workers that are promoted in the state’s 2017-19 biennium budget proposal. We have worked together, under the leadership of 9to5 Wisconsin, to advocate for paid family leave, and have educated the public on important issues in the 2016 state and federal elections.

Our accomplishments include:

- **The 2016 Voter’s Guide for Economic Justice** – members worked together to create a guide for voters to provide them with background and sample questions to ask their candidates on issues including funding for childcare, raising wages for childcare workers, paid sick leave and paid family leave, promoting a private sector pension fund, and promoting funding for public transportation and non-emergency medical transportation.
- **Paid Family Leave (SB215/AB286):** the Dignity at Work Coalition worked under the direction of 9to5 to advocate for a paid family leave bill that would expand the definition of family, lower the threshold for businesses required to participate, ensure wage replacement and job protection.
- **Speakers Bureau:** To promote our issues and policy priorities and inspire the public toward activism, we are creating a Speakers Bureau, which will bring experts from our organizations and people most impacted by our issues to speak to congregations, civic organizations, college campuses, and other venues. We appreciate the support of the South West Conference of the United Church of Christ for this important work.

For more information, including the current full list of member organizations, see www.dignityatworkcoalition.org. Also like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/dignityatworkcoalitionwisconsin. To join the Coalition and/or the Working Groups that focus on specific issues, email dignityatworkcoalition@gmail.com.



FAITH LEADERS BUILDING COMMUNITY, STANDING TOGETHER

This is a critical moment in our nation’s history. Many of our communities are experiencing a palpable fear of what the present political climate will mean for them. But this is also a time of opportunity. People are galvanized to action as never before. Now, more than ever, we must join together to fight against hate, to resist attacks on our communities, and to stand united in trust and love.

In response to this new reality, WFVJ wrote a **Proclamation Against Hate** and sent a letter to the Dane County and Madison elected officials, asking them to pass resolutions in favor of this proclamation (<http://wisconsinfaithvoicesforjustice.weebly.com/voices-for-justice-blog/faith-leaders-statement-against-hate>). Ten organizations and businesses, and over 90 individuals, signed on to the letter. Dane County Executive adopted our resolution, and the Dane County Board of Supervisors and Madison Common Council passed resolutions based on our proclamation.

Three new initiatives grew out of this project. They are described below. To join any of these initiatives, visit our website at <http://wisconsinfaithvoicesforjustice.weebly.com/faith-leaders-building-community-standing-together.html>.

Dane Sanctuary Coalition

In response to the urgent request from Voces de la Frontera (www.vdlf.org), and in close partnership with Voces and Centro Hispano (www.micentro.org), WFVJ has been working throughout Dane County and beyond to educate congregations about the New Sanctuary Movement. We are currently engaged in organizing congregations that have voted to become sanctuary sites (offering physical shelter as the need arises) and sanctuary supporting congregations (providing financial, logistical, and volunteer support to the sanctuary site congregations). Five congregations thus far have voted to be sanctuary sites, and four more to be supporting congregations. We will be making a formal announcement at a press conference on July 6. We are eager to spread this work to other communities around the state. For more information, contact us at wifaithvoices4justice@gmail.com.



Forward Together Wisconsin

Forward Together Wisconsin is a state-wide, intentionally inclusive and diverse moral movement that brings together a broad coalition of individuals and organizations led by faith, philosophy, personal conviction or experience. We are committed to work through nonviolent action for the implementation of sound and ethical public policies and laws at every level which will benefit all of the residents of our state.

Our goal is to build collective power in order to affirm the humanity of every person, uphold the stewardship of the natural resources that sustain us, and preserve the moral foundations of our society. Read more about FTW, including the platform, at www.forwardtogetherwisconsin.org; and at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/the-heartland-moves-forward-faithfully_us_58a0c501e4b080bf74f03dd2

Forward Together Wisconsin sponsored two events this spring. On March 19, we held a vigil at the state capitol on refugee and immigrant rights, LGBTQ rights, health care reform and climate change. See coverage at <http://www.nbc15.com/content/news/Candle-light-vigil-raises-awareness--416569553.html>.



On April 9, FTW presented Trashed? Don't Trash Our Health Care. In the weeks leading up to the event, we gathered stories from Wisconsin residents around the state, illustrating the importance of the Affordable Health Care Act in preserving their health and their lives. (see

video on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPEL0oHKw44> and at www.forwardtogetherwisconsin.org).

Interfaith Community Building Coalition

Over the last year, our nation has seen a rise in hate crimes and threats to the Muslim, Jewish, and Sikh communities. Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice has gathered a coalition of people



from diverse faith communities, to work together to build community, foster trust, and forge relationships among our different faith groups. We pray that this Coalition will be a locus of hope, friendship, and mutual support for all our communities of faith.

On June 10, we held our first major event – Faith, Fasting, and Friendship – an Interfaith Ramadan Break the Fast. Over 150 people of different faiths came together to learn about food and fasting in various faith traditions, and then to share a wonderful pot-luck dinner to break the Ramadan fast. A food drive for Second Harvest Food Bank was an important part of the evening. We raised \$326 and brought in 48 pounds of food.

You can find more photos from the event on our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/WisconsinFaithVoicesForJustice.

ADVOCACY WORKSHOP

From the ancient Israelite prophets crying out on street corners, to modern-day Buddhist monks immolating themselves in protest against tyranny and injustice, religious leaders and people of faith have been inspired and impelled to speak out in the public square. Social justice is a fundamental concern of most faith traditions, manifested both through service and through activism. But sometimes congregations are reluctant to engage in advocacy. Sometimes they fear violating their tax-exempt status. Some feel advocacy is not an appropriate activity for faith communities. And some are eager to get engaged, but feel they lack the skills and resources to be effective.

Our three-session workshop, **Moving from Charity to Justice: A Workshop in Faithful Advocacy**, dispels myths about what congregations can and cannot do in terms of advocacy and discusses how to engage the congregation in an advocacy campaign; and provides hands-on experience in writing letters to the editor or op-ed pieces; and in making a lobby visit or testifying on an issue.

The ability of congregations and people of faith to be effective advocates for a moral vision for our state and country is vital if we are to create the just and equitable world we all desire. This spring, we were able to provide the trainings to area congregations around Madison, due to the sponsorship of two local congregations. We would love to bring this workshop to your area. Contact us at wifaithvoices4justice@gmail.com to learn more.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Health care reform has been a signature issue of Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice from the beginning. In our first two years, much of our work was engaged in presenting workshops explaining the Affordable Care Act and helping people sign up for the Marketplace. Current efforts to undermine and undo affordable health care are months, we have been engaged awareness about the benefits dangers in the legislation being Facebook page, our e- have been providing members and encouraging them Congress, and with our own we can make a difference!



the tremendous gains in access to deeply disturbing. In the last six in an ongoing campaign to raise of the Affordable Care Act and the proposed to replace it. Through our newsletter, and our action alerts, we information and resources to our to make their voices heard in the halls of governor and state legislature. Together,

PARTNERSHIPS

Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice works very closely with faith communities, social service organizations, and advocacy organizations. We are indebted to all our partners for their generosity in sharing resources, materials, information, and opportunities to raise the religious voice in the public square.

- People of Faith United for Justice is a partnership of faith organizations that come together every other year to organize a statewide advocacy day to address moral issues in the biennium budget proposal. This year's issues included threats to social safety net programs (food stamps, BadgerCare, housing assistance); clean water; and sex trafficking.
- Medicaid-Matters – a coalition of health care advocacy organizations led by the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health, which shares information, analyses of legislation, messaging, and action alerts. Our participation in this body has been invaluable in helping us keep track of the quickly-shifting landscape in health care 'reform' in the current Administration.
- NAACP – Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice has long had a close relationship with the Wisconsin NAACP. Most recently, on September 12, we partnered with the NAACP to sponsor the Moral Day of Action at the state capitol, in coordination with similar events across the country, led by Rev. William Barber.
- Rev. William Barber and Repairers of the Breach brought their Revival of Moral Values tour to Milwaukee on November 2, 2016. Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice took part in this event, with Rabbi Margulis participating as one of the speakers.
- On January 29, 2500 people gathered at Monona Terrace to talk about how we, as a community, can join together in solidarity to fight against hate. Wisconsin Faith Voices

for Justice was part of the organizing team. At that event, a new organization we helped to form was introduced - We are Many- United Against Hate.

- Wisconsin Interfaith Light and Power and Tikkun Ha-Ir held a climate change vigil in which we participated. We also co-led our advocacy workshop at a WILP conference.
- National Voter Registration Day – as part of this national effort to bring out the vote in the 2016 election, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice President Rabbi Margulis was trained as a volunteer registrar and WFVJ co-sponsored registration events.

WISCONSIN FAITH VOICES FOR JUSTICE **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Vicki Berenson
Society of Friends
Madison
Quaker

Rabbi Marc Berkson
Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun
Milwaukee
Reform Judaism

Linda Ketcham
Madison-Area Urban Ministry
Madison
United Church of Christ

Rabbi Bonnie Margulis
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice
Madison
Reform Judaism

*Mary Nervig, LCSW
Madison
ELCA

**Denotes new members*

Reverend Michael Rehak
The Institute for Congregational Identity
Cambridge
ELCA

*Reverend Oscar Rozo
St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Beaver
Dam, and
Comunidad de Todos los Santos in
Watertown
Episcopal

Reverend Larry Sexe
Deerfield Lutheran Church
Deerfield
ELCA

Reverend Nick Uthall
Advent Lutheran Church
Madison
ELCA

MEMBER CONGREGATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Organizational members are listed in order of joining, with the most recent members last.

<p>Madison-Area Urban Ministry PEPartnership, Inc. Wisconsin Friends Action Network (Quakers) FUMC and Society Mission Team Temple Beth El Beth Israel Center Lake Edge Lutheran Church Still Point Zen Center North Central Wisconsin Worship Group (Society of Friends)</p>	<p>Lake Edge United Church of Christ's Mission Team Snowflower Sangha Board of Church & Society, United Methodist Church, WI First Unitarian Society Social Justice Ministries Advent Lutheran Church Memorial United Church of Christ, Fitchburg Middleton Community United Church of Christ Faith in Action Team</p>
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MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

Funding for Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice comes solely through membership dues and the generosity of our supporters. Your dues and contributions go toward the support of all our programs – for web and listserv hosting; materials for workshops and events; for outreach and publicity materials; for food at events; and for travel around the state. We continue to expand our membership donor base, and are exploring grant options from local and statewide foundations and other funding sources.

Our annual dues structure is:

Congregation/Organization Over 200 members	\$100	*Individuals	\$ 25
Congregations/Organizations Under 200 members	\$ 50	*Students	\$ 10

*In cases of financial hardship, pay what you can, but please pay something.

All contributions and dues payments are much appreciated. We are 501c3 non-profit organization and all contributions are tax-deductible. Donations can be made on our website – www.wisconsinfaithvoicesforjustice.org, or by check payable to Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice and sent to:

WFVJ
22 Chautauqua Trail
Madison, WI 53719

Please join us on Facebook at:

www.facebook.com/WisconsinFaithVoicesForJustice

Visit our website:

www.wisconsinfaithvoicesforjustice.org

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