



April Church Update

Northern Waters District Peace With Justice Ministry Team

Beth Pelkey opened our April agenda with thoughts about Jesus interrupting his Last Supper with the disciples to give an object lesson on service. We are all interrupted by the stay-in-place order. Let's learn from the interruption. Let's move Jesus' lesson on serving to the top of our action lists.

What a difference a month makes! During the April meeting, the PWJMT members discussed the responses of their local church to the new circumstances caused by the coronavirus. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those suffering health issues and to their families and friends.

We are challenged by needs related to COVID-19. We commit to act in those places that need our extra time and energy, even as the PWJMT members join their churches' charity responses covering urgent needs because of the virus.

The Michigan Conference Board of Justice Facebook page (Board of Justice, Michigan Annual Conference UMC), the link to our United Methodist Church and Society (<https://www.umcjustice.org/news-and-stories>), and our NWD churches' recent lived experiences are resources that will direct our advocacy actions and education needed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognize now more than ever that advocacy is needed. Our advocacy will bring God's values to the choices that are being made to overcome the consequences of COVID-19. Our advocacy will help the decision-makers realize their need to make choices that value people. Those are kind of choices that are best for our country and world. The Holy Spirit is leading; together we are serving and actively creating the new normal.

FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION (FCNL)

Advocacy Training Transitioning to a Virtual Format

Pam Boyce, the PWJMT member who has worked on the FCNL Advocacy Training publicity, reported on the changes necessary for the Training because of the postponement of the Michigan Conference. After discussion, the PWJMT agreed that the FCNL should go forward in a virtual format.

Pam **called us to celebrate the response to the registration for advocacy training.** There were seventy-seven registrations through the conference web site. Pam informed us of the additional numbers she has through her offer to help people register. Pam has kept recruiters from community partners up-to-date and many are registering through these recruiters. Pam has also kept informed many people who had previously acknowledged their intent to attend.

God is working in the hearts of many in our churches showing their desire to gain skills as we work together bringing justice through advocacy. Our advocacy discipleship will be God working through our “yes”, transforming the structures and systems of the world back to God’s intent. This is a long way of saying God is working in hearts showing the importance of advocacy.

Already over one hundred, and now the possibility of picking up additional attendees across the state who are interested in advocacy yet were not able to make the trip to Traverse City. Pam has committed to continue to be the point person informing the recruiters and attendees.

SAVE THE DATE!
FCNL Virtual Advocacy Training (Zoom)
Wednesday, May 27, 2020, 6pm-8pm

Those working on the planning include representatives from the MI Board of Justice; Rev. Paul Perez and Rev. George Covintree; Sarah Freeman-Woolpert of FCNL and from NWD PWJMT Pam Boyce and Randie Clawson. Your suggestions are desired.

GOD IS ANSWERING JESUS’ PRAYER THROUGH US

Below are some of the words spoken by Jesus to his Father in prayer, as recorded in John 17:6-26. Jesus prayed for his disciples and for us.

Verses 18-21.

As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ...I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

May we realize God is answering Jesus’ prayer as we work for justice, co-creating a more just society. When the world has seen and experienced our acts of love, service and advocacy they may come to believe in Jesus.

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