

"I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people..."

Amos 7:8



WITNESS

Oregon-Idaho Chapter, Methodist Federation for Social Action

October 1, 2020

"Fight for the things that you care about. But do it in a way that will lead others to join you."
— Ruth Bader Ginsburg

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The world is on fire! First there was six months of COVID – wearing masks, staying away from other people, communicating and meeting electronically. Then there was the death of George Floyd and Black Lives Matter protests. Then the wildfires came – wiping out large portions of several small towns and filling the air across our states with hazardous smoke. Some people began to ask – What's next? Locusts. No, no locusts. What came next was the death of RBG – Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.



I found myself immobilized after the death of RBG. How do we go on from here? What can we do to survive this new catastrophe? These words from Hebrews 12 came to mind: "let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith..."

I taught school for 21 years and during most of that time, I had an old desk with a pull-out shelf on one side – kind of like a pull-out cutting board in your kitchen. I taped to that shelf the words from Hebrews and when I would have a moment to go sit in my desk chair, I would pull out that shelf so I could read those words. The card is long gone, the words barely legible by the time I left teaching. The words remain: "let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith..."

I keep asking myself how to live out these words right now. The pandemic continues and we continue to follow safety guidelines and remain physically distant from other people, doing our best to keep from spreading this illness. The protests continue even though they do not seem to be having any positive impact. Many of us have begun to read and study and discuss our complicity in white supremacy and what we can do to change our actions and the actions and structures of our institutions. The wildfires are slowly being brought under control and we continue to help the survivors, remembering that there will still be a need for help for many years to come.

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The more challenging question is how to honor the legacy of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. How do we keep everything she worked for from disappearing from our society? She gave her life for justice, for equity, for the rights of all people.

The first step is to vote. In whatever state you live in, make sure you are registered to vote. Your voice is needed, and so is the voice of your neighbor. Deciding not to vote is the same as letting someone else cast your ballot – you have given away your vote through your absence. Talk to your friends, your family, your neighbors (appropriately distanced, of course) and make sure they are planning to vote. It may seem like a small step/action to cast a vote. When we run with perseverance, each step we take is important. We have not been given a choice about the race that is set before us today and we do not run it alone. We run it together – and we run it with Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. How we run this race is based on our faith, our willingness to let Jesus lead us.

May God’s strength and courage carry you on the next steps.

Working Together for Justice,
Karen Nelson

YOU ARE INVITED to any of our regular MFSA Board meetings!
We meet virtually every month, usually on the 3rd Wednesday, from 1:00pm-3:00pm PT.

These meetings begin with a program of up to an hour on topics relating to social justice. If YOU or your group has an idea for a future program you would like to share, please let us know!

Upcoming scheduled meetings are:

October 21 via ZOOM

If you want to join us, please contact Karen Nelson.

Dates to Remember

October 7, 1:30-3:00pm PST (for 6-weeks): Me and White Supremacy Journal group, contact [Rev. Brenda Wills](#)

October 17: International Political March: Women’s March and we Demand More Coalition

October 21, 1:00-3:00pm PST: Oregon-Idaho MFSA Executive Board meeting, via ZOOM

October 24, 2-5:00pm PST: Mini Transformational Prayer Retreat, via ZOOM

November 3: General Election, Make a plan to VOTE!

November 18, 7-8:30pm PST: [EMO Collins Summit](#), via ZOOM

January 28: Newsletter submission Deadline



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OR-ID MFSA ON THE WEB:
www.oimfsa.org

CONTACT US AT:
oregonidaho@mfsaweb.org

VISIONS OF ACTION

Black Lives Matter Rally

Salem OR; June 6



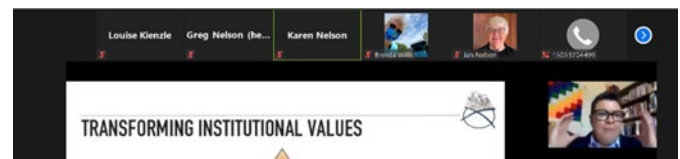
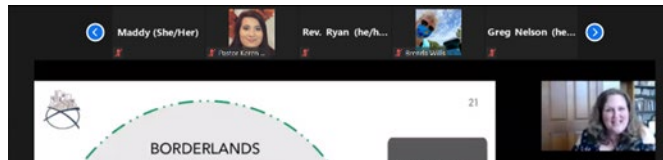
Churches for Middle East Peace

Webinar; June 10



Anti-racism Video and Discussion

August 19 and September 23



NEWS, OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTION

GET OUT AND VOTE!

Maddy Hickerson

We are only weeks away from the next general election and it is crucial that you check your voter registration for you and your family. We want you to have all the information you need this November to get out and vote. This coming election is an opportunity to have our voice heard, and our values upheld to 'Resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves'. To check your registration, or to register to vote, please visit www.vote.org. For more information about voting specific to your state, you can visit *Voting Resources GNW*: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vRGrLwXxFdCp8RJnA7-q8oDtmOGkEUBS-irjkjb4E0vj9Tyik-HucrXBAZbBtMpbJQ-f3rKJB2oEcp/pub>, or call your local county elections office!



WILDFIRES!

Louise Kienzle

The West is on fire and the Oregon-Idaho Conference has not escaped its rage. In the last three-weeks nearly 978,000 acres have burned in Oregon, devastating the communities of Gates, Mill City, Detroit, Talent and Phoenix and more. Statistics change daily, but numbers on this date (September 30) include:

- 17 wildfires are being tracked, 10 of which are considered active;



- Approximately 1 million acres have burned;
- Over 40,000 people were under evacuation notice;
- Thousands of people have been sheltered in churches, schools, other community centers and with friends and family;
 - 4,089 persons are still under evacuation orders
 - 12,835 remain threatened
- Over 1,396 homes have been destroyed;
- Over 1,403 businesses and other structures destroyed;
- 800 school children are newly homeless;
- 16 counties have been approved by FEMA for Public Assistance;
- 8 counties approved by FEMA for Individual Assistance;
- Over 4,550 people have registered for FEMA assistance with the numbers increasing daily;
- 9 people have died; 9 people are still missing.

Our congregations and Pastors have stepped up to provide emergency shelter, shelter for the homeless, meals, storage, relief for crews, hand washing stations, RV parking, emotional and spiritual care training for pastors and coordinating needs for migrants.

During this time of relief, the Red Cross and others will have the challenge of getting large numbers of newly homeless families and individuals sheltered before cold weather settles in. Most of the information here has been provided by Dan Moseler, Conference Disaster Response Coordinator. He has applied for and received an emergency grant and has started ordering supplies from UMCOR and continues to monitor the needs. And there is still so much to do. If you would like to help, you can give online to the Conference Disaster Response fund at <https://www.umo.org/give>. It is likely that when we get to the recovery phase it will take 10-20 years for re-build, possibly more.

There is much more to this story, and it is on-going. You can read more about our conference response and watch for updates at <https://www.umo.org/> and <https://greaternw.org/responding-to-wildfires-across-the-greater-northwest-area/>. The state also has set up a website with information at <https://wildfire.oregon.gov/>. You can also contact Dan directly at djmoseler@gmail.com.

OREGON-IDAHO MFSA CONTINUES TO UPDATE RESOURCE GUIDE ON RACIAL JUSTICE, IMMIGRATION, AND GUN VIOLENCE

The Oregon-Idaho Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA) leadership team is continuing to put together some suggested resources for churches and small groups to access throughout 2020.

We have divided the year up into three topics. We offer the schedule below as a possible way to move forward. The schedule for your church or small group may look different.

- January – March: RACIAL JUSTICE
- April – June: IMMIGRATION
- October – December: GUN VIOLENCE

Materials on racial justice and immigration are available now on our website at www.oimfsa.org/resources. New resources are added as we identify them. We encourage you to use this list of resources and ideas to develop programs and explore issues in your small group or congregation.

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◆ Gun Violence Topic to be Launched in October *Steve Mitchell*

Oregon-Idaho MFSA's third focus topic for information, study, and action this year is gun violence. Many of us are concerned about the amount of violence there is in our country related to guns. Our website will include information and links to resources, books, studies, and groups that are dealing with this topic, and will help you be informed on current legislative action being proposed at the state and national levels. You will find this information on our chapter website, hopefully by the 15th of October. Contact Steve Mitchell at smitchel@cluge.com with questions or suggestions related to this topic.

OREGON-IDAHO CHAPTER FINANCIAL REPORT

Jan Nelson

This summer, our chapter has invested money in antiracism activities, including support for the national board's racism audit. We spent \$300 for access to an antiracism training video that we viewed and discussed at our August and September meetings. We also spent money to purchase Valarie Kaur's book *See No Stranger* as part of our annual meeting in June. About 20 books are still available. Contact us at oregonidaho@mfsaweb.org if you would like to purchase one or more books for yourself or as a gift.

As a result of these investments, our treasury is a little lower than it has been for a while. If you have not made your membership contribution for 2020 yet, it's not too late! You can renew online or download a form to print and mail at www.oimfsa.org. If you are already a current member, extra donations are always welcome. You can mail a check to PO Box 134, Salem, OR 97308.

JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE

Jan Nelson

The struggle for justice for the Palestinian people continues. With the support of the US government, the Israeli government continues to make the prospects for an independent Palestinian state more and more remote. What can we do?



MFSA has partnered with United Methodist Kairos Response (UMKR) in a series of webinars that are aimed to inform us of the situation and better enable us to advocate for justice. Past webinars are available on the UMKR website at www.kairosresponse.org/webinars. Topics of recent webinars include "Christian Zionism" and "Is it Antisemitic to Criticize the State of Israel". The next webinar will be October 14. We will share the details on our Facebook page as soon as they are available. These events will help equip you to talk with others about justice for Palestine and to advocate with your elected officials.

NEWS AND ACTION FROM NATIONAL MFSA

SUPPORTING AN MFSA ORGANIZATIONAL RACIAL AUDIT

From our MFSA Executive Director, Bridget Cabrera:

As a national organization, MFSA began taking steps last year to address the long-term structural and cultural practices of white supremacy within MFSA through an Organizational Racial Audit. Crossroads Anti-racism Organizing and Training has been facilitating this audit which will help us to grow and become a more anti-racist organization. We do this with the understanding that we, the Christian church, has been the main tool used to embed systemic racism into our society. We can't wait for someone else to fix it. We built this mess that has done

so much harm, and it is our responsibility to change it.

MFSA has made steps to address racism and bias in the past, but we recognize that we have more work to do in order to be actively anti-racist. Like most racial justice work, we start with good intentions, engage in education and trainings, but then it gets too hard and other things come up. We cannot continue to postpone or use superficial fixes in order to make us look good or feel better about ourselves.

Anti-racism work is hard. Our Racial Audit Team is engaging in an intellectually and emotionally intense process that is already beginning to expose patterns and practices that discredit or exploit people of color and undermine MFSA's work for justice. Members of the audit team are confronting the ways MFSA's actions have done harm. We are pushing past the guilt that would paralyze us and are focusing on our work to investigate all the ways MFSA has been complicit and caused harm. We are discovering that the most difficult work is often the work that is the most important and will do the most good.

In the coming months, our Racial Audit Team will continue our work and, at the end of this process, make recommendations to the MFSA Board of Directors. These recommendations will include specific areas to be corrected and new ways of operating to live into as we continue on our journey towards becoming a more anti-racist organization. Addressing systemic racism within our own organization demands the dedication of our entire community.

We need your help. MFSA will not truly change our patterns without the sustained commitment of our national leaders, chapters, communities, and members. We must be willing to engage in honest self-critique and invest in accountable relationships with people of color and people of color led organizations. We must continue this work when it gets too hard and even when we fail and make mistakes.

MFSA made the decision to conduct this Audit last year understanding this would be a significant financial commitment. We did not anticipate a Global Pandemic and all the uncertainty, fear, and challenges it would expose and create. We are grateful for our chapters and individuals who have helped us raise the first \$7,000 towards our \$25,000 goal. Your gift towards the Racial Audit will help us continue this important work and pay for the training and consultation of our team, providing the foundation and support we need to build a more anti-racist organization.

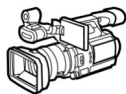
Please consider joining us in this important work by making a financial gift to the Racial Audit today. Go to <https://www.mfsaweb.org/donate> or you can mail a donation to Methodist Federation for Social Action 23 East Adams Ave., Detroit, MI 48226. MFSA is a 501 (c) 3 organization and all contributions are tax-deductible as provided by law.

Our Oregon-Idaho chapter has donated \$1,000 to help fund the racial audit, and several board members have also made personal donations. We are also looking at how we can use the material from the racial audit within our own chapter.

RESOURCES



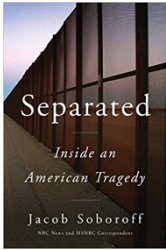
BOOKS,



VIDEOS, MOVIES...

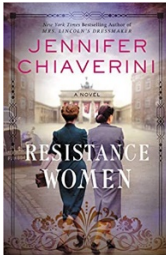
*Sometimes one stumbles across a book, article, video or movie and thinks:
"my social justice friends need to read/see this!"*

Below are a few titles that members of the MFSA Executive Committee have seen, been reading, or used as a group study – please share your suggestions with newsletter editor Louise Kienzle at kienzle.louise@gmail.com for a future edition.



Separated: Inside an American Tragedy by Jacob Soboroff *(submitted by Jeri Silfies)*

NBC News and MSNBC correspondent Jacob Soboroff, winner of the 2019 Walter Cronkite Award for his reporting on the child separation crisis, delivers a profoundly personal and moving report from the border and beyond, revealing the wrenching human story behind one of the most disturbing passages of modern American history.



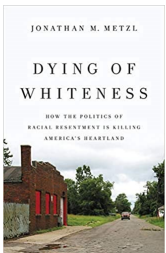
Resistance Women by Jennifer Chiaverini *(submitted by Karen Nelson)*

Resistance Women is an historical novel that begins when American graduate student Mildred Fish meets and marries German economist Arvid Harnack in the 1920s. They spend the first years of their marriage in Madison, Wisconsin and then head to Germany in 1929. Mildred and Arvid are shocked and dismayed at what is happening in Germany. One of the things that caught my attention in this book were the many paragraphs that could have been written about 2020.

"I'll tell you what the young people see. Something different. Something disruptive. For as long as they can remember, their government has failed them. They have no jobs, no hope, only anger, and they have no reason to believe the political parties they've trusted in the past will stave off further decline. To them, change must equal improvement."

"To be feared are those who think of the Führer as a higher being, greater than man, unconstrained and omnipotent."

This book is an excellent story of the resistance movement in Germany, telling how ordinary people were determined to resist the rise of evil, sacrificing their own lives and liberty to fight injustice and defend the oppressed. Not only does it tell the story of another time and place; it also offers us insights into the work of justice that needs to be done in our world today.



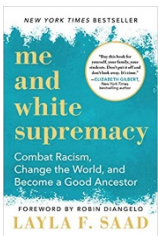
Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment Is Killing America's Heartland by Jonathan M. Metzl *(submitted by Brenda Wills)*

In Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment Is Killing America's Heartland author Jonathan M. Metzl, a physician, tracks anti-immigrant, anti-government, pro-gun politics, often called back lash policies, rooted in a fear that minorities are taking away privileges linked to white American. A stunning and insightful look at our current divided nation.

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/amanpour-and-company/video/jonathan-metzl-on-dying-of-whiteness/>

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/05/05/dying-whiteness-during-coronavirus-](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/05/05/dying-whiteness-during-coronavirus-pandemic/)

[pandemic/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/05/05/dying-whiteness-during-coronavirus-pandemic/)



Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World and Become a Good Ancestor by Layla Saad *(submitted by Brenda Wills)*

Wesley UMC in Eugene led a group in a journey with Layla Saad's book, Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World and Become a Good Ancestor. After participating, I wrote: *White Privilege is the air I breath, the blood in my veins, the lens with which I have lived in the world for nearly 68 years. White Supremacy does not feel broken to me, it feels normal. This important work together has invited me to see the crack, the brokenness, in myself, and in the nation that I love.*

Knowing what is broken, I have begun to listen and learn; I have come to name my racism and turn in a new way (repent), becoming an antiracist. One. Moment. At. A. Time.

NOW'S THE TIME FOR ACTION

Now is the time to continue to push for broad systemic change. Here are a few ways you can seek justice in these uncertain and difficult times:

- Use your voice, and **vote** in this November's election. [Click here to make sure you're a registered voter](#), and check your state's election site for specific instructions on any changes to when, where, and how you can vote this year.
- Deaconess Cindy Andrade Johnson joins **refugees at migrant camps** in filling out 1000 to 2000 postcards directed to Dr. Jill Biden, Vice President Biden, and Senator Harris to remember them and change the inhuman policy of MPP, the Migrant Protection Protocol. See a sample to [write a letter and join the grassroots organizing for the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants](#).
- The pandemic marginalizes those already most marginalized in society. [Host a virtual Card Writing Party](#) to write and mail **letters to immigrants** in detention via [The Casa Mariposa Detention Visitation Program](#).
- Jacob Blake was shot multiple times in the back by police officers as he walked towards his car where his children sat. Please **refrain from circulating the video of the shooting on social media** as it traumatizing. Instead, contact local and state officials to [demand that the officers who shot Jacob Blake be held accountable](#).
- In July, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte signed the [Anti-Terrorism Law](#), a law that gives Duterte and his government access and legal grounds to suppress democracy and activists. Duterte's government is currently targeting and trying to silence the voices of the **Philippine people** and activists by trolling them on social media by finding them with the hashtag criticizing the unjust law: #JunkTerrorBill. Take action and [stand in solidarity by sharing this statement](#) and this hashtag #JunkTerrorBill
- [Sign the petition](#) and join [Palestinian Cry for Hope: a Call to Decisive Action](#), a global movement set by **Kairos Response** that "rouses churches to action and awakens civil society to the reality of Palestinian suffering."
- Grow in your personal learning or as a community with a **group study** by taking advantage of [free online university courses on systemic racism](#).
- The **Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe** is currently facing the potential loss of what is left of their homelands, land that the People of the First Light have occupied for over 12,000 years, due to a recent decision made by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Inter-Ethnic Strategy Development Group (IESDG) has shared a [Call to Action opposing the Disestablishment of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe](#). [Sign the petition to stand with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe](#).
- Call your legislators (202-224-3121) and **advocate** for permanent federal paid sick leave, expanded unemployment benefits, SNAP increases, and a moratorium on evictions, utility shut-offs, and payments.
- **Complete the 2020 Census**. It literally takes up 10 minutes of your time, but it will define public policies for the next 10 years.
- So much of this country is in an economic free-fall in **response to COVID-19** while many Americans were already at rock bottom before the virus hit. Use your voice and [sign the petition calling on Congress for a moral response to COVID-19](#). The current legislation doesn't do enough to address the extent of the crisis (universal health care, living wages, worker protection, adequate income, and anti-poverty programs to name a few).
- **Sign the petition: Demand state and federal lawmakers end the use of private prisons and protect incarcerated people from COVID-19**.
- Find **other actions, acts of gratitude and more** at [Americans of Conscience](#).



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If you are a Facebook user, be sure to like our page, "MFSA Oregon-Idaho Chapter". Also be sure to like the national page, "Methodist Federation for Social Action". Invite your friends to like us, too.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/482406915145776>



OREGON-IDAHO MFSA ON THE WEB

For information about MFSA and our chapter, current news, resources and more, go to www.oimfsa.org.

Our newsletter continues to be published electronically. If you have email access, please make sure we have your current email address. If you do not have email access and wish to continue receiving a paper copy please let us know.

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