

ANNUAL REPORT

2015-16





June 28, 2016

Dear Friends,

This past year has been busy and exciting for Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice. We have grown in our membership, our programming, and our public profile. We have nurtured partnerships and collaborations with faith communities and sister organizations, and we are increasingly seen as the go-to organization for faithful leadership for social justice.

Over the last four years, we have created strong programs to educate, inspire, and enable congregations, faith leaders, and individuals to engage in advocacy on issues of social and economic justice. You can read more about our programs in the following pages. Highlights this year include our new three-session advocacy workshop, **Moving from Charity to Justice: A Workshop in Faithful Advocacy**; and our newest and most ambitious initiative, the **Dignity at Work Coalition**. Please read on for more information on these and other projects and programs we have engaged in over the last year.

Of course, none of our work would be possible without the help and support of many individuals and sister organizations. First and foremost, we are ever grateful to **Madison Area Urban Ministry** for serving as our fiscal agent, and MUM Executive Director **Linda Ketcham** for her ongoing help, support, and advice. Our wonderful **Board of Directors** deserves many thanks for all the hours of deliberation, contributions of wisdom and insight, and commitment and passion for social justice (board list on p. 7).

Many individuals helped bring the **Dignity at Work Coalition** to life. Chief among them are **Rabbi Renee Bauer of ICWJ** and **Brian Rothgery of Wisconsin Jobs Now**. **Vicki Berenson from WisFAN** and **Mike Murray and Sara Finger from the Wisconsin Alliance on Women's Health** spent many hours creating the Coalition's listserv, website and Facebook page. The partnership of the organizations that make up the **Steering Committee** is the engine that makes the Coalition work. See the list on p.4.

Finally, we offer thanks to **Dan Weiss and Tim Bickman at LBW Wealth Management** for their pro-bono consulting on membership and financial management systems.

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

Bonnie

Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, President of the Board

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MOVING FROM CHARITY TO JUSTICE: A WORKSHOP IN FAITHFUL ADVOCACY

To help us live out our commitment to faith-based social justice advocacy, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice presents “**Moving From Charity to Justice: A Workshop in Faithful Advocacy**”, a three-session workshop. Workshops are modular and can be offered as one, two or all three of the sessions.

This year, WFVJ has been able to offer the workshop at Platteville United Church of Christ, Lake Edge United Church of Christ in Madison; and for Madison’s Jewish Congregations for Social Justice; and presented a modified version of the workshop in partnership with the Wisconsin Council of Churches for a WCC conference.

Response to the workshop has been overwhelmingly positive. Some comments from participants:
*Sparked my activist needs – inspiring to listen to presenter and other group members
[the packet of handouts] is a useful help – it’ll be useful for a long time*

POVERTY WORKSHOP

Having successfully piloted our Poverty Workshop two years ago, we were delighted to be asked this past year to present this day-long experiential workshop for the board and staff of 4-C - Community Coordinated ChildCare, Inc.

DIGNITY AT WORK COALITION

On May 7, 2015, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice and the Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice convened a meeting of over 20 social justice organizations and faith leaders to discuss ways we can all be more intentional in working together on issues of mutual concern, particularly issues of economic justice. From this initial meeting, and subsequent meetings, grew the Dignity at Work Coalition.

Purpose: The Dignity at Work Coalition brings together Wisconsin people of faith, worker organizations, and progressive advocates to establish a dignified life for all who labor.

Values statement: The Dignity at Work Coalition is made up of groups and individuals who advocate or organize for social and economic justice for all. The Dignity at Work Coalition seeks to establish higher standards of respect and equality for all who labor, greater compassion for working families, and to foster community solidarity in the service of our mission.

Mission: We seek to advance a broad agenda that establishes dignity at work for all those who labor. : We work to secure social change in order to establish: fair pay; predictable, stable hours; paid sick leave; paid family and medical leave; affordable quality child care; accessible public

transportation; an end to racial discrimination in hiring and employment practices; pension protection; and a voice at work.

Goals: The goals of the Dignity at Work Coalition are 1) to be a locus for intentional partnership among coalition members to foster existing and new campaigns. 2) To support coalition member groups and organizations who are engaged in active campaigns focused on at least one of our core issues. 3) to help develop and launch new campaigns together to advance our core issues.

The Dignity at Work Steering Committee:

4-C	Wisconsin Council of Churches
9to5	Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice
Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice	Wisconsin Jobs Now
Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health	Wisconsin NAACP

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.

OPEN LETTER TO SENATORS BALDWIN AND JOHNSON RE: SUPREME COURT VACANCY

On March 1, 2016, WFVJ sent a letter to Senators Baldwin and Johnson, signed by seven faith organizations and 170 people of faith, urging them to move forward with the Supreme Court nomination process. The text of the letter said:

Dear Senator Baldwin and Senator Johnson,

We, the undersigned organizations, faith communities, and individual people of faith, are writing to urge you to work to move the Senate forward with appropriate hearings and a timely vote as soon as President Obama puts forth his nominee for the Supreme Court.

The citizens of the United States deserve to have their cases heard before a full Court, and need to have confidence in the work and decisions of that Court. It would be unconscionable for the Senate to abdicate its responsibilities under Article II, Section 2 to advise and consent on a Supreme Court nominee. Political considerations and election-year politics, on either side of the aisle, have no place in the nomination process for the highest Court in the land, and serve only to frustrate the federal judicial system. The only consideration should be the fitness of the nominee to serve.

As people of faith, we believe in the rule of law and the necessity of a functioning and reliable court system. We urge you, therefore, to exert your leadership and persuade your colleagues on both sides of the aisle to fulfill your Constitutional responsibilities.

The list of signatories can be found at <http://wisconsinfaithvoicesforjustice.weebly.com/supreme-court-vacancy-open-letter-to-senators-baldwin-and-johnson.html>

PARTNERSHIPS

Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice works in close partnership with other faith-based and advocacy organizations to further the causes we all care about. Below are some of the activities we have engaged in with our sister organizations.

- **The Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice** inaugurated a text study series to be a resource to clergy and faith communities looking for materials for adult education study, workshops, sermons, etc. WFVJ was part of a task force that helped advise on the creation of this project, and two board members contributed pieces to the project. You can find the **Text Study Project** at <http://workerjustice.org/textstudyproject/>.
- Last summer, the national NAACP announced **America's Journey for Justice**, a 1002 mile march from Selma to Washington, DC, to raise awareness for "fair criminal justice system, uncorrupted and unfettered access to the ballot box, sustainable jobs with a living wage, and equitable public education." (<http://www.naacp.org/ajfj>). Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice joined with the **Wisconsin NAACP** to sponsor local events in support of the national effort, to raise awareness locally for these issues. Rallies were held at the Wisconsin State Capitol on August 28 and September 16, 2015. Local clergy, board members from the WI NAACP, and Wisconsin legislators, plus the Raging Grannies, all raised their voices in solidarity to inspire us all to action on these important issues facing our state and our nation.
- Last fall, **9to5** drafted legislation to create a plan for paid family leave for Wisconsin's working families. Senator Janis Ringhand and Rep. Sondy Pope introduced the legislation into the Senate and Assembly. WFVJ work with 9to5 to promote and advocate for the bill through a press conference, lobbying training and lobbying events. Please sign the petition in support of this important legislation - <https://www3.thedatabank.com/dpg/264/personal2petition.asp?formid=WFMLI>.
- WFVJ advises and aids the **Jewish Congregations for Social Justice** in Madison on issues related to faith-based social justice. This year, the JCSJ sponsored a racial justice speaker series and followed up with ideas for involvement and engagement for the members of the Madison synagogues.

ADVOCACY

WFVJ continues to advocate with state and local elected officials on issues of poverty, hunger, and homelessness. Some of the issues on which we have advocated include:

- On August 18, we testified before the Assembly Committee on Public Benefits Reform in opposition to AB 222 which would have required a photo ID to be placed on SNAP benefit cards
- WFVJ spoke out in favor of Rep. Melissa Sargent's living wage bill and a proposed living wage ordinance proposed in the Dane County Board.
- We opposed a Dane County ordinance moving homeless from in front of the City-County building
- WFVJ sponsored an interfaith press conference with Faith in Public Life on FPL's Value Voters Guide (<http://www.faithinpubliclife.org/#!wisconsin-clergy-call-for-return-to-valu/v0udc>)

MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

Funding for Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice comes solely through membership dues and the generosity of our supporters. Your dues and in-kind donations go to pay for all our programs – for web and listserv hosting; Xeroxing and materials for workshops and events; for outreach and publicity materials; for food at events; and for travel around the state.

Madison-Area Urban Ministry serves as our organizational incubator and fiscal agent. MUM is an interfaith social justice organization that has spurred social change in and around Dane County. MUM's mission is to be "a prophetic voice for justice, neighbors working together for social change." MUM serves as an incubator and fiscal agent for innovative ideas and new projects in the Madison WI region. WFVJ is one of those projects. **As MUM is our fiscal agent, all membership dues and contributions should be made via check, made out to MUM, with a note that identifies them as dues or contribution to WFVJ.** Contributions made to WFVJ through MUM are tax-deductible.

Our dues structure is:

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

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

All contributions and dues payments are much appreciated. Make checks payable to MUM and send to:

WFVJ
22 Chautauqua Trail
Madison, WI 53719 Earmarked for WFVJ

WISCONSIN FAITH VOICES FOR JUSTICE 2015-17 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(*term ending; **new board members)

Rabbi Bonnie Margulis - President
Reverend Stephen Marsh – Vice President
*Rabbi Jonathan Biatch – Treasurer
Vicki Berenson - Secretary
*Reverend Khyati Penney Johns
Reverend Ellen Rasmussen
Rabbi Marc Berkson

Linda Ketcham
Reverend Michael Rehak
Reverend Larry Sexe
Reverend Joseph Baring
**Reverend Paula Harris
**Reverend Nick Utphall

WISCONSIN FAITH VOICES FOR JUSTICE MEMBER CONGREGATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS

Madison-Area Urban Ministry
PEPartnership
Lake Edge Lutheran Church
Temple Beth El
Beth Israel Center
Still Point Zen Center
First United Methodist Church and Society
Mission Team

Lutheran Office of Public Policy
Lake Edge United Church of Christ Mission
Team
Wisconsin Friends Action Network
(WisFAN)
Snowflower Sangha

Please join us on Facebook at:

www.facebook.com/WisconsinFaithVoicesForJustice

Visit our website:

www.wisconsinfaithvoicesforjustice.org

Follow us on Twitter:

[@Wifaithvoices](https://twitter.com/Wifaithvoices)