

Dialogue

A reflective journal about faith and action
from Madison-area Urban Ministry

Fall 2011

“Standing with the poor and hurting of Dane County”

This is the first part of Madison-area Urban Ministry’s mission statement. You don’t hear many candidates talk about standing with the poor. Candidates and elected officials are very good about promising to stand and fight for the middle class. What they either don’t understand or choose to ignore is that the fate of the middle class and the poor are inextricably linked. It is exactly because we have allowed candidates, political parties and elected officials to demonize and blame the poor that we now find middle class public employees and union employees demonized and blamed for the woes of the state budget.

Corporations have done quite well in the past decade. Even those caught up in the financial and banking collapse of 2008 are now sitting on billions of dollars. Many of those elected in the fall of 2010 both to Congress and the WI Legislature ran on job creation and the economy. They have done little if anything to address those issues. Instead they have selected to attack programs that assist the growing number of poor in our country, as well as the middle class. Many of those elected to Congress and the Legislature have opted to throw those not drowning into the lake rather than pulling those who are already drowning out of the lake, arguing that the sacrifice is then shared. Except of course those who own the boat are still safe and dry.

Theologian William Sloane Coffin

wrote “charity yes, always, but never as a substitute for justice.” Too often we focus on charity and forget about justice. Homeless shelters are not justice, they are charity. They are important but they do not create social change that results in real solutions to homelessness. Food pantries are crucial to the survival of too many families in our community but they do not create social change that results in an end to hunger here and around the world. Tutoring programs are important to the success of many children

**“Charity, yes,
but NEVER
as a substitute
for justice.”**

but in and of themselves they do not create an educational system that engages every child in learning and overcomes the racial achievement gap in our public schools. Eviction prevention funds are important to the immediate needs of a family, but rental assistance does not ensure access to fair and affordable housing. Charity yes, but never as a substitute to jobs that pay a living wage, provide health-care and paid sick leave. Charity yes but never as a substitute for access to

fair, affordable housing for all people. Charity yes but never as a substitute for criminal justice system reforms that end the obscene racial disparities and systemic racism in our criminal justice system. Charity yes but never as a substitute for access to medical and dental care for all people. Charity yes but never as a substitute for a political process that draws people in rather than actively seeks to disenfranchise them.

In this edition of the Dialogue you will find information about the proposed cuts to human services in the Dane County Budget. You will read about mysterious signs popping up in City and County buildings designed to keep the homeless out. You will read about efforts to challenge the status quo. And as you read please know that you have a crucial role to play in that challenge.

“Standing with the poor and hurting of Dane County.” It is what we have done for the past forty years. It is what we will continue to do. It doesn’t always make us popular. It doesn’t always translate into corporate and foundation support. It does make us true to our calling and to the covenant we have made with our faith community partners. As we prepare to enter our forty first year we pledge that we will continue to stand and fight for both charity and justice.

In faith,

Linda Ketcham

Obtaining an Identification Card to exercise your right to vote:

Earlier this year the legislature passed the Voter ID law designed to disenfranchise voters. While the suggested rationale for the law was to prevent voter fraud, there exists no evidence that voter fraud in WI is rampant, wide spread or indeed seen in numbers over about 20 individuals per election.

Beginning in January 2012 voters will need to show a valid state identification card in order to vote.

Acceptable forms of identification are:

- A Wisconsin driver's license expiring after November 2, 2010
- A WI DOT issued photo ID card expiring after November 2, 2010
- U.S. passport expiring after November 2, 2010
- Military ID card expiring after November 2, 2010

- Certificate of naturalization issued within the last two years
- Unexpired WI driver's license or state ID receipt
- ID card issued by a federally recognized Indian tribe in Wisconsin
- An unexpired identification card issued by a WI accredited university or college that must include an issuance date, student signature, and expiration date within two years of issuance. Proof of enrollment is also required.

State IDs are available for free.

If you are eligible to vote but do not have a WI identification card or driver's license you are eligible to receive a free state ID for voting purposes. The Department of Motor Vehicle staff has been instructed not to tell you that you have the right to a free ID so you will need to check a box on the DMV appli-

cation to indicate that you need the ID for voting purposes.

To obtain an ID you will need to present documentation. The types of documentation include but are not limited to:

- Birth certificate, or valid passport, or naturalization papers
- Social Security card, or military papers, or marriage papers.
- Proof of Wisconsin residency: utility bill, or paystub, or mortgage.
- Proof of U.S. Citizenship
- Social Security number

For more complete information about the new law go to the voting@cityofmadison.com; www.cityofmadison.com/election or <https://vpa.wi.gov>

Civil Rights Leader Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth Mourned

On October 5th Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth died. Reverend Shuttlesworth was a founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He marched with Dr. King. He served as pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham in the 1950s where he founded the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. In 1960 he participated in the sit-in protests against segregated lunch

counters. In 1961 he helped organize the Alabama Freedom Rides. Despite fire hoses, dogs, and death threats Reverend Shuttlesworth continued the crusade for civil rights, mobilizing thousands of others to get involved.

Reverend Shuttlesworth's work helped light the path for the next generation to continue to work for civil rights. He was a courageous leader and we honor his memory and legacy.

MUM launches our new and improved website

It has taken awhile but starting in November, MUM will launch our new and improved website. The site will be more user friendly, more up to date and you will be able to make donations online. We hope you'll visit the site at www.emum.org.



MUM is proud to be a member of the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice

Dialogue is a reflective journal of faith and action printed by Madison-area Urban Ministry staff. The positions expressed here are the opinions of the authors and not necessarily the board of directors or funding sources of MUM. All individual members and all faith communities in Dane County receive a copy. Individual membership

in MUM is encouraged. Please mail contributions to our address below.



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MUM has two new initiatives



The Phoenix Initiative

The Phoenix Initiative is a structured support group for formerly incarcerated men and women. Consistent with evidence based practices that call for gender specific and responsive programming

for women there are two Phoenix Initiative groups, one for men and one for women. The groups are led by formerly incarcerated men and women and are structured to provide mentoring, leadership development and follow a Restorative Justice model, by offering opportunities to help repair the harm done to the community by

crime. The Phoenix Initiative for men meets Thursday evenings 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. at MUM.

The Phoenix Initiative for Women is a women's group based on the needs for women to connect, share and learn from one another. We will have our first meeting on Oct 17th at 9:30-11:30am. The meeting will be held at The South Side Neighborhood House 29 South Mills St Madison WI, 53715.

For more information or to have presentation about the Phoenix Initiative contact MUM Associate Director Barbara McKinney at barbara@emum.org.

Ready to Rent.

Ready to Rent is an educational workshop based on the Rent Smart curriculum developed by the University of WI Extension. This past summer MUM Associate Director Barbara

McKinney and AmeriCorps Member Lavaisha Terry attended a Train the Trainers event and are now ready to offer the programs. The curriculum focuses on budgeting, understanding your rights and responsibilities as a tenant, maintaining your home, landlord/tenant relationship, and other areas related to a successful renting experience. The program is being offered by MUM at the Dane County Jail and will be offered in various community venues. This is an outgrowth of our Greater Isthmus Group with financial support for the program coming in part from the Apartment Association of South Central Wisconsin.

For more information about Ready to Rent contact MUM Associate Director Barbara McKinney at barbara@emum.org.

MUM in the News

Since our last newsletter MUM has been involved in number of events:

- MUM provided witness against the Legislature's Concealed Carry Law. The press event was called by WAVE, a statewide anti violence organization. As a follow-up MUM's director had an op-ed in the Voices Newspaper related to concealed carry. The piece was in the June-July edition.
- MUM's Executive Director spoke at a press conference held by the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. We were there in support of their "Wisconsin Values Budget" which can be found at www.wccf.org. The event was covered in an article by Pat Schneider in the May 19th Capital Times.
- On Tuesday July 19th MUM Director Linda Ketcham was the guest on WORT's A Public Affair hosted by Cynthia Lin. The topic was the hunger strike being held by inmates at California's Pelican Bay Prison. To hear the show go to <http://archive.wort-fm.org/>.
- MUM's Associate Director Barbara McKinney was interviewed by Madison Times Editor David Dahmer in the September 14-20 edition of the Madison Times. It is a wonderful interview and a great way to learn more about Barbara and the passion she brings to her work at MUM and in the community.
- On Wednesday Sept 28th MUM Director Linda Ketcham along with Rabbi Bonnie Margulis of the President of Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Reverend Phil Haslanger, Pastor at Memorial United Church of Christ in Fitchburg, and John Huebscher, Executive Director of the WI Catholic Conference took part in a panel discussion on Wisconsin Eye. The program focused on the Concerned Religious Leaders of

Wisconsin's statement and the Governor's budget. To view the 30 minute program go to <http://www.wiseye.org/Programming/VideoArchive/EventDetail.aspx>.

- MUM was also a co-planner/sponsor of the September 11th Interfaith Service of Remembrance and Healing held at Grace Episcopal Church. Faith community leaders from the Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities lead over 200 participants in meditation, prayer and song for healing, mourning and hope. Thank you to Grace Episcopal Church for pulling the event together.

What's new with Mentoring and Family Connections?

By Fabu Carter

In January 2011 Madison-area Urban Ministry (MUM) promoted me to Program Coordinator for MUM's Mentoring, Family and Reading Connections programs. All three programs serve children who have an incarcerated parent.

Family Connections takes children and caregivers to visit their moms in Taycheedah Correctional Institution. Reading Connections provides books for moms to choose, program volunteers record the moms reading to their children, and then we mail a letter from mom, the book and the DVD to their children. Mentoring Connections is a community based mentoring program that matches children (4-17 years) with volunteer mentors. All three of these programs depend on caring volunteers and we are recruiting volunteers.

Growing impact

When I began with Mentoring Connections in 2004, I had the pleasure of working with the Family Connections of WI, Inc Executive Director Laurie Bibo. I want to acknowledge her many years of care and devotion to the families and volunteers in Family and Reading Connections that helped build a strong foundation that we continue to build upon. It is a wonderful experience to witness how happy the mothers are to send taped readings to their children and even more wonderful to see the faces on both parents and children when they meet in the visiting room at Taycheedah. MUM has increased its outreach to children with these three important programs by one third and now serves approximately 100 children, caregivers and moms each month.

Interns, sponsors and events make a difference

This summer brought a student intern into our program, Jacob 15. Jacob and his six siblings have been participants in Mentoring Connections since 2005.



(Left) Two children and their mentor having fun at the MC holiday party.

(Below) UW Service Learning students enjoy spending time with children at the party.

Jacob helped us prepare for the United Way's annual Middleton Day of Caring on Friday, August 26. Thank you again to the extraordinary sponsor who sent in money to give Jacob a token of appreciation for his service and help him earn money this summer. Middleton Day of Caring is always full of exciting activities that included fishing, arts and crafts, book and toy give away. It starts with matching an adult volunteer to each child, them eating lunch and having fun together. It ends with each child getting a backpack full of school supplies, their own fishing rod and tackle. If you know of children still needing school supplies, please contact me at MUM. Dean Care on Stoughton Road did a later school supplies event for MUM and we have some supplies remaining. We would like to thank both sponsors for helping our students start off the school year with the supplies that they need to be successful. We also had a summer intern, Connie Thai, a student at UW Madison, assisted in our office at Middleton Day of Caring and who has continued as a volunteer with Reading Connections.

Holiday Party

Our Holiday Party is scheduled for Thursday, December 1, 5:30 – 8:00 pm at the Lussier Community Education Center (previously Wexford Ridge) at



55 South Gammon Road near Memorial High School. The kind people at TDS have been our major sponsor for this party. I have already seen the effects of our worsening economy on the families that Madison-area Urban Ministry serves. We had a 25% increase in students needing school supplies, and there are increased requests for financial assistance from Moms with keeping lights turned on in homes, gas cards and asking for groceries. The Holidays are stressful times for parents who will often not pay their rent or other bills in order to assure that their children have holiday food and toys.

Ways in which you can help are:

- Become a program volunteer, either as a mentor or as one of our volunteers who accompany the children to Taycheedah and help record moms reading to their children.

Continued on next page

Meet our staff



Back row (left to right)

John Miller, Joshua Clauer, John Givens, Antonio Williams, Lonnelle Crosby

Middle row (left to right)

Kristine Shaw, Jackie Austin, Shawna Lutzow, Ida Thomas, Fabu Phillis Carter, Carmella Hulvey Glenn, Lynn Miller, Lori Powell

Seated (left to right)

Linda Ketcham, Director

Barbara McKinney, Associate Director

(Not pictured: Bill Bittner)

Mentoring *from page 4*

- Make a financial donation to Madison-area Urban Ministry in support of these programs. We do not receive any government funding for the programs and we rely on donations and support from local foundations like the Madison Rotary, Evjue, Capital Kids Fund and others.
- Adopt a family in need.
- Have a book drive for multiethnic and Spanish language books at church or work (for book suggestions contact Fabu at fabu@emum.org).
- Connect us to resources that MUM might not be aware of.

If you know children who have a mom at Taycheedah

Our next Family and Reading Connections trip will be Saturday, December 17. If you know of children in our community who need a free, safe ride to Taycheedah Correctional Institution, please contact me at our office (608) 256-0906 or by email at fabu@emum.org. Thank you and may your time with family and friends be blessed.



(left to right):

Shawna Lutzow (AmeriCorps Member)

John Miller (The Phoenix Initiative)

Lonnelle Crosby (The Journey Home)

Antonio Williams (AmeriCorps Member)

Kristine Shaw (Madison College Intern)

Carmella Hulvey Glenn (Windows to Work)

New staff members of MUM's Re-Entry Team

Lonnelle Crosby joined our staff as a Resource Specialist in July. Lonnelle has a degree in human resources and has worked with formerly incarcerated men and women through the Employment and Training Association. Lonnelle relocated to Madison from Minnesota, he brings a wealth of experience in employment and focuses on building relationships with employers and working on job skills with program participants.

John Miller joined our staff through the CCEP program in July; however John was not new to MUM. John first met us on January 5, 2010 when he was released from prison and began working with our re-entry team. John is a Resource Assistant and works with our Phoenix Initiative, a support

group for formerly incarcerated men that meets every Thursday at 5:00 p.m. here at MUM. John brings a passion for this work borne out of his own life experience and his desire to build a stronger, safer community.

Shawna Lutzow and **Antonio Williams** both began their AmeriCorps term of service with us in August. Shawna and Antonio are with MUM through the United Way of Dane County's Mobilizing Volunteers Initiative. They work with the Circles of Support and Journey Home programs to help recruit and train volunteers for Circles of Support as well as assist us in our in-reach into Wisconsin prisons to meet with incarcerated men and women prior to their release.

Everybody has to be somewhere – don't they?

Homelessness in our community.

These numbers come from the City of Madison Planning and Community Economic Development Department: CDBG Office. These numbers are compiled annually and are collected from agencies that use the WI ServicePoint (WISP) homeless management information system and those that do not. Use of the WISP system helps to minimize duplicative counting of individuals seeking services.

2010 Emergency Shelter Totals: In 2010 a total of 3,136 individuals were served in 312 year round and 37 overflow emergency shelter beds, warming house mattresses and volunteer host homes. It also includes those served through motel vouchers, but does not include those that may have been helped through non-shelter providers such as faith communities and other non-profits. In 2010 1,605 individuals were turned away without shelter in 2010, of those, 97% were individuals in families.

Twenty five percent of families with children seeking shelter were trying to escape a domestic violence situation. Twenty three percent of single women seeking shelter were doing so as a result of domestic violence. About one third (31%) of all those seeking emergency shelter and 42% of families seeking shelter report that they were "doubling up" or staying with friends or family prior to seeking shelter. Thirteen percent of homeless families reported sleeping in their cars or on the street prior to entering the shelter.

By the third day of school this year the Transitional Education Program through the Madison Metropolitan School District had already identified 127 homeless children attending Madison Schools. As homelessness grows in our community the Middleton/Cross Plains district has instituted a similar program.

Many of our readers likely know that when individuals are using shelter it does not mean that they have a

Longest Night, Homeless Person's Memorial December 21

On December 21st, the longest night of the year, MUM along with Community Action Coalition, First Congregational United Church of Christ, Lakeview Lutheran Church and Christ the Solid Rock Baptist Church will hold the fourth annual Longest Night Homeless Persons Memorial Service.

The service celebrates the lives of the homeless members of our community who have died during the past year. The service also offers an opportunity for individuals who are homeless to lift up the names of loved ones they have lost during the year but perhaps were unable to pay their respects or grieve.

The event will begin at 4:00 p.m. on the Capital Square. We will gather at the first marble bench at the intersection of East Main Street, South Pinckney and King Street, near the bench where Dwayne Warren, a member of our community who was homeless died.

At 5:00 p.m. we will conclude the service so that individuals who are homeless are able to enter the shelter at Grace Episcopal Church when it opens its doors at 5:00.

If you or your congregation would like to get involved please contact MUM at 608-256-0906. If you have names of individuals you would like remembered at the service contact linda@emum.org.

safe place to be during the day. Individuals leave shelter during the day, many used to find a warm, dry place to sit in the Capitol cafeteria or at the downtown library. However the Capitol cafeteria has been closed to the public for months with no indication of when the Governor's administration will re-open it and as the city prepares to close the downtown library for renovations it appears that there will be fewer places for homeless individuals in our community to rest, stay warm and to connect with the community. A number of faith communities and homeless services providers are working on adding about 100 spots for people during the day to stay warm and rest. Bethel Lutheran Church is proposing to expand their availability Monday through Friday, the Off the Square Club located at St. John's Lutheran church, and others are working on this plan. However, the space

will still not be enough to compensate for the loss of respite once provided by the Capital cafeteria.

Housing is a Human Right

Dane County's Affordable Housing Action Alliance, operation Welcome Home, Freedom Inc. and Take Back the Land have drafted the "Housing is a Human Right" Resolution for consideration at both the County and City level. Madison-area Urban Ministry has already signed on in support of the Resolution and both the City and County are looking at it for passage. If you would like a copy of the resolution you can find it at: www.operationwelcomehome.wordpress.com.

The groups are working on another resolution "Food is a Human Right." That resolution is still being crafted. MUM is putting together a statement of faith in support of the resolutions.

**“And the people bowed and prayed
to the neon god they made.
And the sign flashed out its warning,
in the words that it was forming.
And the sign said the words of the prophets
are written on the subway walls, and
tenement halls.”**

Sounds of Silence, Simon & Garfunkel

Despite restoration of some funds, significant cuts are still proposed for human services in Dane County

The proposed 2012 Dane County budget released by County Executive Joe Parisi includes over \$1.3 million in cuts to human services. In accordance with the County Executives directive the budget proposed by the Department of Human Services included over 3.1 million in cuts. Dozens of people testified during two nights of public hearings. Among them members of the faith community organized by MUM and witnessing against the cuts to crucial services to youth, seniors, families, people with addiction, disabilities, mental health challenges and homeless families. MUM was there both nights.

Executive Director Linda Ketcham testified both evenings. On Monday she read a statement on behalf of MUM in opposition to the cuts. On Tuesday Linda and Reverend Ken Pennings presented a letter/petition written by people of faith, labor leaders, non-profit directors and environmental groups. The letter/petition

calls for the County Executive and County Board to consider alternatives to the funding cuts, including a minimal (\$15 - \$20) vehicle registration fee that would be used to support the road fund, which is currently funded by general purpose revenue/property tax dollars. Having individuals who use the roads pay for their maintenance and infrastructure would free up general purpose revenue to support human services.

■ On Friday Sept. 30th the County Executive announced that his budget would put \$1.9 million dollars back into the human services budget. It is our position that the restoration of the 1.9 million dollars is a good start but because over the past ten years funding for human services has remained either stagnant or has been cut. The safety net cannot sustain the cuts proposed in the Executive's budget without resulting in a loss of services, longer

waiting lists (the waiting list at Domestic Abuse Intervention Services – DAIS is 40 days for emergency housing for women seeking to flee an abusive partner, the Salvation Army's Warming House is turning an average of 30 women and children away each night). What is needed is a full restoration of funding for human services, especially since the \$1.9 million restored includes funding for new initiatives and positions at the county level, meaning that those new initiatives and positions are likely being paid for through cuts to existing programs.

If you would like a listing of the proposed cuts or would like a copy of the letter and petition delivered to the County Health and Human Needs Committee contact MUM at linda@emum.org.

- On June 20th MUM staff met with the County Executive to discuss the challenges faced by individuals and families involved in the criminal justice system.
- On May 27th MUM's Executive Director along with 14 other non-profit leaders met with the County Executive to discuss the current status of the safety net and the continued increase in demand for services.
- On Wednesday October 19th MUM will lead a contingency of faith community leaders to meet with County Executive Parisi's Aide. We will also be requesting an additional meeting with the County Executive. We want to make sure that, as people of faith our voices are heard, that we are helping to lift the voices of the disenfranchised, of the growing number of struggling families and people living in poverty in our community.

If you would like more information on the outcome of the October 19th meeting please email linda@emum.org.

Recent Wisconsin legislation

Trend shows disregard for impact on minorities and revocation of local control

Recent legislation disproportionately affects minorities and strips local control from cities, counties and municipalities.

Several bills before the state legislature represent significant changes to current protections under civil rights ordinances across the state. In addition these bills will likely disproportionately impact people of color in our State, especially African American men.

Senate Bill 107: Tenant Rights

Senate Bill 107 which was passed by the Senate and is awaiting action by the Assembly wipes out decades of tenant protections in counties across the state. The bill prevents local municipalities from passing ordinances that would expand protected classes to fair housing law. The bill will allow landlords to use credit information, employment history, level and source of income and criminal conviction or history to deny applicants for housing. Of course when we talk criminal conviction records in a state that consistently ranks in the bottom three in terms of racial disparities in the criminal justice system we then recognize that this bill will disproportionately affect African Americans in our state, especially since the bill offers no time limit on the conviction.

So, a now 34 year old who was convicted of a crime at age 17 but not since is still subject to housing denial because of a mistake 17 years prior. Kudos to County Supervisors Bayrd, Sargent, Hesselbein, and Eicher, Common Council Members Bidar-Sielaf, Brian Solomon and School Board Member Passman for their strongly worded letter to Governor Walker and the Legislature regarding

the discriminatory nature of this bill as it pertains to criminal conviction.

Assembly Bill 286/Senate Bill 207: Hiring and Firing

This bill will allow employers to refuse to hire, or to terminate from employment someone with an unpardoned felony and preempting cities, villages, towns and counties from adopting provisions concerning employment discrimination based on arrest or conviction record that prohibit activity that is allowed under the state fair employment law.

The proposed bill further states that: "it is not employment discrimination because of conviction record to refuse to employ, or to bar or terminate from employment, any of the following:

- An individual who has been convicted of a felony and who has not been pardoned for that felony;
- An individual who has been convicted of a felony, the circumstances of which substantially related to the circumstances of the particular job, and who has been pardoned for that felony;
- An individual who has been convicted of a misdemeanor or other offense, the circumstances of which substantially related to the circumstances of a particular job;
- An individual who is not bondable under a standard fidelity bond or an equivalent bond when such bondability is required by state or federal law, administrative regulation, or established business practice of the employer.

It further reads "no county, city, vil-

lage or town may adopt any provisions concerning employment discrimination based on arrest or conviction record that prohibits any activity that is allowed under this section.

The bill has been referred to the Committee on Labor, Public Safety and Urban Affairs. In all likelihood the sponsors of this bill view themselves as people of faith and perhaps could be reminded their traditions views on forgiveness and redemption.

Several bills before the state legislature represent significant changes to current protections under civil rights ordinances across the state.



Volunteer Opportunities

Board service :: work together to sustain and develop MUM

Mentoring Connections :: mentor the child of an incarcerated parent

Family Connections :: accompany children to visit incarcerated moms

Circles of Support :: Re-connecting formerly incarcerated men and women with positive community role models who assist in the transition from prison to home

Office Assistance :: helping with a variety of tasks in the MUM office

Returning Prisoner Simulations :: guiding participants as they "take a walk in the shoes" of a newly released prisoner

Re-Entry Simulations :: help MUM conduct "rehearsals for re-entry" for prisoners who are near their release date

If you're interested in volunteering, contact us at mum@emum.org or 256-0906.

No surprise: Poverty has been going up with the rise in unemployment in Dane County and Wisconsin

After a decline in 2009, unemployment in Wisconsin is on the rise

According to the Center on Wisconsin Strategy (COWS), 7.8 percent of Wisconsin's workforce is currently unemployed. At the end of 2007 the state's unemployment rate was 4.5%. The rate doubled in 2009 after the labor market crashed following the financial crisis. The rate began to decline in 2009, and at this time last year was below 8 percent and continued to decline to 7.3% this past April. Since then it has been increasing. In their paper *The State of Working WI - Update 2011*, unemployment is defined as an individual who meets the following criteria:

- 1) Has had no employment during a given week;
- 2) Was available for work during that time; and
- 3) Has made specific efforts to find employment sometime during the past four week period.

People who are laid off from a job and expect to be recalled do not have to be looking for work to be counted in the unemployment count.

COWS also found that employment opportunities are most scarce for those who are lower down the ladder in the labor market. Twenty five percent of African Americans in Wisconsin are unemployed, four times higher than the rate for white Wisconsinites. Younger workers and workers who are less educated also fare worse, with an unemployment rate of 15% for

workers ages 16-24. The unemployment rate among Hispanics is 10%.

Add in the racial disparities in incarceration rates and some of the punitive legislation like SB 207 and it is easy to see too why unemployment continues to beleaguer individuals returning to our community from prison.

Poverty increases in Dane County

According to the 2010 US Census the median income in Dane County dropped 10% over the last decade. The number of people in poverty and considered living in "extreme poverty" also increased. In Dane County the median household income dropped from \$64,410 in 1999 to \$58,661 in 2010. The percentage of those living in poverty rose from 9.4% to 12.2 percent. Poverty among children rose dramatically during that period too. According to the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families the number of children living in poverty in Wisconsin increased by 43% from 2008 to 2010, a rate that, while behind the national rate, is growing at a faster rate than in the nation as a whole. According to WCCF in 2008 Wisconsin had the 12th lowest rate of childhood poverty, two years later we've slipped to 24th. Our neighbors in Minnesota have the tenth lowest rate of child poverty in 2010.

We must ask again, is this really the time to cut human services in Dane County?

An Example of how the State Budget is affecting the poor and hurting in Dane County

State health officials have released reforms to the State Medicaid program that tightens eligibility and may result in thousands of Wisconsin citizens losing their medical coverage. The plan in theory will save more than \$500 million by 2013 (if you don't factor in what those of us with insurance will pay in increased premiums and hospital bills to provide emergency medical care for people without insurance). The department is not sure how many people will be affected by the changes but their internal documents have suggested that more than 50,000 people could lose their BadgerCare and BadgerCare Plus Core coverage and an additional 215,000 could be moved into programs with reduced benefits. The BadgerCare programs it should be noted are funded jointly by the State and Federal governments and provide affordable medical insurance for individuals who are employed but are either not offered insurance through their employers or cannot afford the coverage offered by their employers.

Is
NOW really
the time to cut
human services
in Dane
County?



Be social.

Join our group on Facebook where we share the latest news on relevant legislation, events and news. Simply search for **Madison-area Urban Ministry**. We'd love to have you join the conversation.

Concerned Religious Leaders of Wisconsin

New group advocates for a moral path to fiscal responsibility

Madison-area Urban Ministry is a founding member of Concerned Religious Leaders of Wisconsin. On August 18th the group held a press conference to introduce our statement "A Religious Witness to the breach in the Social Covenant for the Common Good between the People and the State of Wisconsin, January through June 2011.

Quoting from the statement: "a truly democratic government acts in accordance with the wishes of the governed. It has, in the past, been the desire of the people of Wisconsin – through the social service, educational, and healthcare programs of its government – to assist its citizens to maintain lives of dignity and honor. And many Wisconsinites pursue this goal because of the religious values to which they subscribe.

The biblical book of Genesis teaches us that humanity was created in the divine image. We understand this to mean that each person on the planet possesses some aspect of the divine, and therefore we must treat each person with kindness, justice and respect. Many religious traditions share the concept of the Golden Rule, that is, that we must act toward others, as we would want them to act toward us. This ethical directive, existing between and among all inhabitants of our world, forms a 'social covenant' that holds not only between individuals, but also between the citizenry and our government.

It is this social covenant that we seek to uphold each day in our work as religious leaders. Yet we have seen many elements of this covenant shredded in the recently passed biennium budget. As religious leaders of Wisconsin who are heirs to the prophetic tradition of social justice, we call upon our Legislature to search deep in their souls to find a more moral path to fiscal responsibility.

Our state government's refusal to maintain this social covenant with its

citizens has led to widespread anger and discontent. The will of the people has been disregarded, citizens' voices have been silenced, the rich have benefited at the expense of the poor, and budgets have been balanced on the backs of the impoverished, the sick, and our children....."

Unfortunately, as has been the case throughout the last eight months, the local and state media have, for the most part chosen to ignore activities and events coordinated by people of faith that challenge the current approach to governance. This was true of a press event in February where clergy from around the state gathered at the steps of Grace Episcopal Church to call on the Governor to propose a just and moral budget. Indeed, over

eighty clergy from around the state gathered, there were several hundred people at the event, there was no media. In early March MUM was a co-sponsor of the People of Faith United For Justice Lobby Day. Coordinated by the Wisconsin Council of Churches the event brought over 600 people

of faith from around the state to lobby their legislators. No media coverage.

If you would like to follow the work of Concerned Religious Leaders of Wisconsin you can go to www.concernedreligiousleaders.blogspot.com. There

you will be able to read the full statement and sign on to the statement. Thank you to Rabbi Jonathan Biatch for his lead role in crafting the statement and for maintaining the blog.



The local and state media have, for the most part chosen to ignore activities and events coordinated by people of faith that challenge the current approach to governance.

If we don't stand up and speak out, who will?

Come to the Dane County budget hearing to oppose any cuts to human services.

Monday, October 24 at 7:00 p.m.

**City County Building, Room 201
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Madison, Wisconsin**

Come at 6:45 p.m. to join a prayer vigil before the hearing.

Beat those Winter Blues

*A Fundraiser
for Madison-area
Urban Ministry*



Save the date!

Thursday evening,
March 1, 2012

New location:
Madison Christian
Community
7118 Old Sauk Rd. in Madison

This event, MUM's only fundraising event of the year, will have a new format and a new location, but you can still expect good music, good food, good conversation and merriment for a good cause.

Want to help?

If you have an item or a service you could donate to our silent auction OR you would consider being an event sponsor, contact lori@emum.org.

Come join us and "Beat those Winter Blues"

THANKS! AND MORE THANKS!

MADISON ROTARY

FOUNDATION for a grant to support MUM's Family Connections and Reading Connections programs. The programs help transport children so they can visit their incarcerated mothers at Taycheedah Correctional Institution and they record mothers reading to their young children and provide a DVD of the mother reading, and a copy of the book with a cover letter, are sent to the child to keep the connection between mother and child.

CAPITAL TIMES KIDS FUND

to support Reading Connections.

ALLIANT ENERGY

FOUNDATION for a Community Grant.

PLEASANT T. ROWLAND

FOUNDATION for their donation to the Dane County School Supplies for Kids project.

Starting in November, you will be able to give your gift online at www.emum.org.

Support MUM's work for social justice

Yes, I'd like to support Madison-area Urban Ministry's social justice programs!

\$175 Sustaining annual

\$100 Supporting annual

\$65 Household annual

\$50 Individual annual

\$_____ Student/Low/Fixed Income (Please contribute based on ability)

Check enclosed payable to Madison-area Urban Ministry: \$_____

Name/s _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please send your contribution to: Madison-area Urban Ministry, 2300 S. Park St., #2022, Madison, WI 53713

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, October 22
9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Monday, October 24
Vigil at 6:45 p.m.
Hearing at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 1
Save the date

Returning Prisoner Simulation Part of the Wisconsin Book Festival. For more information contact jackie@emum.org. Register online at www.wisconsinbookfestival.org/prisonerreentry.

Dane County Board Budget Hearing. Come to the Dane County budget hearing to oppose any cuts to human services. Come at 6:45 p.m. to join a prayer vigil before the hearing. City County Building, Room 201, 210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Madison.

Beat those Winter Blues Save the Date for MUM's 2012 Fundraiser. March 1st, At Community of Hope, 7118 Old Sauk Road, Madison. For more information visit our website at www.emum.org.

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