Budgets are Moral Documents

Lent began on March 1st. Lent marks the beginning of 40 days (minus Sundays) leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus. The forty days symbolize Jesus’ fasting in the wilderness, enduring temptation as he prepared for his ministry. This year the Christian Holy week (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter) coincide with Passover. Maundy Thursday is the commemoration of Jesus’ last supper, the Passover meal with his disciples. The holiday of Passover commemorates God’s sparing of the children of Israel and their liberation from slavery. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, a reminder of our brokenness and our mortality. As someone who identifies myself as a Christian I found it ironic that the Trump Administration released its budget during Lent, a budget that seems a stark reminder of our country’s spiritual and moral mortality. Ironic because this Administration courted Christian conservatives professing strong Christian values, and yet has proposed a budget that gives huge tax breaks to the wealthy, includes massive increases in defense spending, and would have us spend billions to build a wall to keep out the stranger - all at the expense of “widows and orphans.”

It is said that budgets are moral documents. As such, we find little morality in this budget document. We find little in this budget that cares for our brothers and sisters who are struggling. We find little in this budget that frees the oppressed or offers a fair deal to exploited workers who remain subjugated to corporate masters - masters that demand more and more profit, yet do little or nothing to share that profit with their employees who have created the wealth. We find little in this budget that heals the sick, offers water to the thirsty or clothes the naked. What we find is a budget that worships the golden calf that is the market,

“Hope is a state of mind independent of the state of the world.”

the CEO, and the corporation. It is idolatry. An important element of the Lenten season is becoming aware of not only the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus, but also of those with whom Jesus drank and ate, of those Jesus called to him, ministered to and healed. In his book Faith Works: Lessons from the Life of an Activist Preacher, Jim Wallis talks about the three faces of poverty in our country: material, spiritual, and civic poverty. Wallis says that the words of the prophet Isaiah, in Chapter 58, address the three faces of poverty. In this Chapter, Isaiah connects personal and social healing, and suggests that there is more to poverty than just economics. The world’s religious and spiritual traditions focus on how we treat the materially poor and excluded people, and they suggest that the state of poor people is a moral test for the health of any society. Those traditions call us to move beyond charity as a response, and to move toward deeper solutions of social and economic justice. Those same traditions also draw our attention to spiritual poverty, which can be experienced among people of any economic status. In the materialistic culture of the U.S. today, our attachment to things is pervasive. It is particularly disturbing when it blinds the more affluent to the needs and suffering of their neighbors. The worship of things and detachment from common purpose robs our lives of meaning and leaves us feeling empty.

The clarity of the Bible on the subject of wealth and poverty rarely comes up in this country - this despite the fact that so many elected officials claim that our country was built on Judeo Christian values. In a 1997 article in The Washington Post titled Woe to You Who Are Rich, Peter Wehner, a conservative Christian and policy director of a conservative Republican organization called Empower America, pointed out that the Bible is pretty direct on the subject of wealth and poverty. Wehner quoted large portions of Scripture in order to demonstrate how spiritually
dangerous wealth is, according to both Jesus and all the biblical authors. Wehner points out how insistently the Scriptures are in demanding compassion and justice for the poor and oppressed. The implication is clear according to Wehner: America’s affluence puts us in great spiritual danger and our lack of concern for the poor is our nation’s moral failing. Indeed, despite the consistent efforts of many politicians, clergy and pundits to blame poor people for their poverty by suggesting that their poverty results from a lack of virtue, according to the Bible the opposite is true: in a society with widespread poverty, the virtue of the rich is suspect.

In his 2009 book *Rediscovering Values on Wall Street, Main Street and Your Street: A Moral Compass for the New Economy* Jim Wallis focuses on what happened in our country that led to the Great Recession. He offers a biblical example of what he calls spiritual poverty, one that seems as relevant today as it did back then. It is one of the stories we hear during Lent, that of Jesus entering Jerusalem and overturning the tables at the Temple. A little context is helpful here. During the Passover week pilgrims traveled to Jerusalem and were expected to offer a sacrifice at the Temple. It wasn’t realistic to travel with livestock, so merchants sold animals and doves for the pilgrims to purchase upon arrival. In addition, money changers set up shop because only one type of coin could be used in the temple. Jesus enters the Temple and finds that the money changers were inflating the currency rate, and the merchants could charge whatever they wanted for the sacrificial animals because they had a monopoly.

What angered Jesus was that worshippers were often cheated in the marketplace. He even targets the merchants selling doves because doves were the least expensive and so most likely to be purchased by the poor. Jesus found a marketplace that exploited the poor, who had little other choice. It was, as Wallis describes it, “a subprime marketplace in which a few accumulated great wealth for themselves at the expense of those who could least afford to pay. No doubt the money changers would have argued that they were only responding to a demand of the market but Jesus didn’t see it that way, what was happening in the market place was a spiritual and moral problem, not just an economic one.”

Wallis ties our spiritual poverty to our nation’s civic poverty, a poverty that sees fewer and fewer people engaged in the process of voting, a poverty where the civic discourse has devolved to political candidates who pander to fear, and who mock those who are different from them. Candidates who would have us believe that decisions must be either-or, that “and” is never an option. They deny that we can have both a strong defense and strong communities where children do not go hungry. They would have us believe that businesses cannot be profitable and pay workers a livable wage. These are false dichotomies. These are false narratives.

Wallis offers three lessons that we need to take away from both the Great Depression and the Great Recession. First, relationships matter, i.e. the collapse of the relationship between employer and employee that was once one of mutual benefit and is now too often one driven by exploitation. Second, our social sins matter. The excesses and opulence that preceded the Great Recession of 2009 had not been seen since the excesses and opulence of the 1920s that preceded the Great Depression. Wallis says “This is not coincidence when wealth comes to those who fail to add value to our economy that social sin will soon find the sinner out. And history shows that an increasing gap between the rich and the poor is a prime indicator of imminent collapse.” Third, our own good is inextricably linked to the common good. When businesses are concerned only with the bottom line it becomes a race to the bottom. This is what we’re looking at with comments by Administration spokespersons who suggest that defunding meals on wheels and hot lunch programs in schools are good for the bottom line, yet ironically, the bottom line doesn’t matter when proposing tax breaks for the

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Budgets are Moral Documents

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wealthy, spending billions on a wall and massive increases to the military budget, all of which will add to the deficit.

I’ve painted a pretty bleak picture, I know. But here’s the thing, I’m not hopeless. William Sloan Coffin once said “Hope is a state of mind independent of the state of the world. If your heart’s full of hope, you can be persistent when you can’t be optimistic. You can keep the faith despite the evidence, knowing that only in so doing has the evidence any chance of changing. So while I’m not optimistic, I’m always very hopeful.” So that’s me, hopeful. Hopeful because we are seeing what Wallis called for nearly a decade ago, “a theology of solidarity.” A theology that brings us together across divisions, a theology that recognizes that the wellbeing of every member of our society is key to a healthy and strong country. A theology that sees connecting with others as essential for our own souls.

I’ll end with a prayer by Civil Rights Attorney and Sikh Interfaith activist Valerie Kaur that sums up the hopefulness I feel:

In our tears and agony, we hold our children close and confront the truth: The future is dark.

But my faith dares me to ask:

What if this darkness is not the darkness of the tomb, but the darkness of the womb?

What if our America is not dead but a country still waiting to be born? What if the story of America is one long labor?

What if all the mothers who came before us, who survived genocide and occupation, slavery and Jim Crow, racism and xenophobia and Islamophobia, political oppression and sexual assault, are standing behind us now, whispering in our ear: You are brave? What if this is our Great Contraction before we birth a new future?

Remember the wisdom of the midwife: “Breathe,” she says. Then: “Push.”

Now it is time to breathe. But soon it will be time to push; soon it will be time to fight — for those we love — Muslim father, Sikh son, trans daughter, indigenous brother, immigrant sister, white worker, the poor and forgotten, and the ones who cast their vote out of resentment and fear.

Let us make an oath to fight for the soul of America — “The land that never has been yet — And yet must be” (Langston Hughes) — with Revolutionary Love and relentless optimism. And so I pray this Sikh prayer:

Nanak Naam Chardi Kala,
Tere Bane Sarbat Da Bhalla

“In the name of the Divine within us and around us, we find everlasting optimism. Within your will, may there be grace for all of humanity.”

In faith,

Linda Ketcham
Director

In memory of:

Jeanne Burger
From Gail Snorheim
Who truly appreciated
Jeanne’s generous heart & from Jeanne herself, who left a generous bequest to MUM

Ed Daub
From
Cynthia Bush

Timothy Scott Pfeifer
From Chuck & Jean Pfeifer for Healing House because Tim would have been delighted to contribute

In honor of:

Grace Matthews Bloodgood
On her 2 year anniversary
From Janice Reek

Rabbi Bonnie Margulis
In honor of Bonnie’s birthday!
From Eleanor Margulis

Jeanne Marshall
For Healing House
From her BFF Kathryn Woodson

MUM thanks these donors for their support of our social justice programs and advocacy
On December 29th MUM received a $25,000 matching grant to support Healing House. The gift is to honor the memory of Timothy Scott Pfeifer, the son of Jean and Chuck Pfeifer. Many of you know Chuck as MUM’s first Director. From 1973 until 1998 Chuck laid the foundation for MUM, helping guide the agency and community through some difficult times. Timothy Pfeifer died in 2015. He was an attorney, loving son, brother, uncle and friend. This gift honors his memory and celebrates his life by helping to open the doors to Wisconsin’s first Medical Respite facility, Healing House.

We thank the donors to the Timothy Scott Pfeifer Matching Grant:

- Patricia Arnold
- Betty Custer
- Rita Dodge
- Mary Fulton
- Gerald Greenfield
- John Henriques & Laurie Frost
- Karen Hester
- Ruth Hoffman Hein
- Becky Jones
- Linda Ketcham
- Helen Kennebeck
- Helen & Ernest Madsen
- Paul Patenaude
- Leila Pine
- Betty Steinhoff
- Agnes Steichen
- Meg Stevens
- Chuck Stonecipher
- Carolyn Virginia
- Katheryn Woodson
- St. Ignatius Orthodox Church
- St. John’s Lutheran, Madison
- St. Andrew’s Episcopal
- Today Not Tomorrow

We are over halfway to our goal of $25,000 in matching funds. Gifts can be made to MUM, 2115 S. Park St., Madison, WI 53713 - Please put “Pfeifer Matching grant” in the memo line.

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**Interfaith Vigil for Justice**

MUM co-sponsored an Interfaith Vigil for Justice on March 19th, and we continue our other regular advocacy work focused on economic justice, racism, homelessness and criminal justice system reform. The past two months we have been working with several employers in Dane County as they explore “banning the box” on their employment applications in order to open more doors to opportunity for people who have conviction records.
Launched in the fall of 2013, MUM’s Just Bakery program has grown steadily, offering training in commercial baking to 60-70 individuals each year. Students obtain their ServSafe Certification, a training certificate from the WI Baker’s Association, can get class credits through Madison College, and receive help to obtain and retain employment. Additionally, the Just Bakery program staff members work with participants by connecting them to housing and other community resources. As the program grew, we soon realized that we needed our own kitchen access. While the FEED Kitchens on North Sherman Avenue provided the perfect spot to launch our program, we now require a kitchen that offers us 24/7 access so that we can expand.

On Friday, March 10th Just Bakery held a ribbon cutting ceremony and tour at the site of our new commercial baking kitchen. The event was held to thank: our donors and partner congregations; Willy St. Coop, MG&E, American Family for their help in funding the equipment for the new bakery; and the City of Madison. MUM owes a special thank you to Lakeview Lutheran Church, which since 2013 has provided $24,000 annually through the in-kind donation of classroom space to the program. We also owe special appreciation to First Congregational United Church of Christ and to Memorial United Church of Christ: both congregations contributed to our launch and were the first to invite our students and staff to sell the bakery products. Today we have over 25 congregations in Dane and Dodge Counties that support the Just Bakery program and we are incredibly grateful for their support. Through donations and sales we have raised $96,000 of the $124,000 equipment cost to equip the new kitchen. If you would like to help us retire the remaining $28,000 in costs, we would welcome and deeply appreciate donations to MUM, with “Just Bakery equipment” in the memo line.

Enjoying tour of the kitchen: Annette Miller, Director of Madison Gas and Electric’s Emerging Markets & Community Development, with Gary Wolter, MGE’s C.E.O.

Angela Jones, Director of United Way of Dane County’s Community Impact – Building Economic Stability, speaks at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

District 17 Madison Alder Samba Baldeh, Nasra Wehelie of MUM, bakery visitor, and John Vaudreuil, former US Attorney, WI Western District

John Mejchar with Carmella Glenn, Just Bakery Coordinator (center), and Rev. Debra Mejchar of the MUM Board

MUM Director Linda Ketcham, with Ken Johnson and David Smith of the Just Bakery staff, are all smiles at the Grand Opening of Just Bakery at 1704 Thierer Road in Madison.
Greater understanding of our intersectionality

Over the past several months we have seen significant efforts in Madison, Wisconsin, and across the country, to come together to support one another, to maintain the safety net, to oppose discrimination in all its ugly forms and to build bridges instead of walls.

Recently, U. S. Army Veterans who are Muslim offered their assistance to protect Jewish Cemeteries that have been targeted in anti-Semitic attacks across the country. Additionally, an online campaign called “Muslims Unite to Repair Jewish Cemetery” raised more than $115,000 to repair the gravestones toppled over at the Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery in the St. Louis suburb of University City, Missouri.

In another example of community outreach and concern, dozens of volunteers from various faiths helped clean up the Mount Carmel Cemetery in Philadelphia after it was vandalized. Such outpourings of compassion and empathy are indicative of how neighbors step up to support each other through coming together through reparative action to repudiate hate.

It would seem that our society is awakening to the realization that there is great intersectionality when talking about the rights of the poor, the homeless, immigrants, refugees, people of color, women, people with conviction histories, people with disabilities, people of different faith traditions, LGBTQ, the elderly – we’re in it together. Our issues and concerns intersect.

The only way to find justice is to find it together, and not pitted against one another. To that end, MUM is active in several efforts focused on support for immigrants and refugees in our community, and MUM is part of a workgroup focused on sanctuary that is led by Centro Hispano and Voces de la Frontera. MUM will continue to support community work in which we seek justice together.

MUM Co-sponsors Advocacy Day: People of Faith United for Justice

On April 4th people of faith from around Wisconsin will gather at First United Methodist Church in Madison to learn more about issues of concern to us and to lobby our legislators to care for all of our residents. People of Faith United For Justice is a day-long biennial gathering to learn, discuss, pray and advocate together for social justice issues of importance to all the people of Wisconsin. As a new legislature works on the next state budget, our representatives need to hear about our values, priorities and concerns. The focus of this year’s advocacy gathering is on the issues listed below.

Protecting Our Social Safety Net
Wisconsin families rely on food stamps, housing vouchers, BadgerCare, and other programs to help them meet their basic needs. Raise your voice to protect access to these vital services.

Confronting the Hidden Problem of Sex Trafficking in our Rural and Urban Communities
Support bi-partisan efforts and challenge our legislators to do more.

Preserving Clean Drinking Water
Lead and manure in our water supplies threaten human health throughout our state. Tell your legislators we must ensure safe drinking water for everyone.

The April 4th People of Faith United for Justice Advocacy Day is sponsored by the WI Council of Churches, Madison-area Urban Ministry, WI Faith Voices for Justice, the Lutheran Office for Public Policy, Jewish Federation of Madison, Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, the Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation, and the Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice. For more information visit www.wichurches.org under “Events”
The Bad…

**WI DOC said to be considering use of private prisons**

Excerpts from an article reprinted with permission from Madison365

For the first time, a member of Governor Scott Walker's cabinet has indicated that the use of private prisons may be back on the table in Wisconsin. Though Governor Scott Walker was an advocate for private prisons as a state legislator in the 1990s, no member of his administration has broached the topic publicly since he’s been governor.

Wisconsin Department of Corrections Secretary Jon Litscher, however, recently told the State Assembly Committee on Corrections that he would consider the use of for-profit prisons to deal with inmate overcrowding, according to State Rep. Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee), who was present at the meeting.

“We are going to get inmates on the new drunk driving legislation,” Goyke said, referring to newly-enacted laws that include stiffer sentences for repeat-offender drunk drivers. “That will explode the prison population. So I was asking the Secretary how we will house them. Right now we house extra inmates in county jails. What will we do when the jails are all full? That was my question to the Secretary that prompted him to use the word privatization. He had a total ‘oops’ moment. The whole room fell silent when he said that.”

DOC spokesperson Tristan Cook explained that Litscher’s comments were strictly a hypothetical exercise intended to explore options if prison overcrowding persists in Wisconsin. “The use of private prisons would be a very last resort when DOC has exhausted all other options,” Cook told Madison365…

Wisconsin law currently prohibits private prisons in the state, but about 5,000 inmates were shipped to private prisons in Oklahoma, Minnesota and Tennessee from 1998 until the early 2000s at a cost of $45 million. Walker’s Republican Party controls both houses of the state legislature, which could vote to legalize private prisons in the state. An effort to do just that, championed by then-Representative Walker, was turned back in the 1990s, largely due to pressure from public-sector labor groups — the very groups Walker’s Act 10 decimated in 2011…

Litscher’s apparent willingness to consider private prisons to alleviate overcrowding comes amid a number of administration policies that virtually ensure prisons will remain overcrowded…

Goyke said rather than increasing prison space, the state should look at decreasing the number of inmates.

This piece was produced by a student reporter in the Madison365 Academy. For the full article and to learn more go to http://madison365.com/doc-may-seek-private-prisons/

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What good is it my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them: “Go in peace. Keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.

James 2:15-17

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**Proposed State and Federal budgets threaten the safety net**

The news just keeps getting worse and worse for the people with whom we work. The following is a description of just some of the state and federal budget proposals that threaten our communities:

**Proposed State Budget Cuts**

The Governor’s budget has proposed cutting $3 million from state eviction prevention funding. This will impact programs like DIGS (Dwelling Intervention Grants & Sustenance) through Porchlight and other eviction prevention funds. The absurd part of this budget proposal is that it costs a great deal more to rehouse someone after they have lost housing than it costs to keep them in their housing in the first place. Eviction prevention funds help single parents, who may have lost wages while caring for a sick child, to remain in their housing. These are funds that help low-income senior citizens to stay in their homes after receiving an unexpectedly high utility bill (yes, you can get evicted if your power is shut off).

This budget is really disturbing and has the potential to decimate the safety net, putting more people into homelessness.

To read more in-depth analysis of the Governor’s proposed budget and its impact on children and families we recommend reports by the WI Council on Children and Families (www.wccf.org). Their Budget Project does an excellent job summarizing concerns and

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possible impacts, and their Budget for Everyone offers concrete steps our legislators could take to create a budget that meets our state’s needs without harming families (including rolling back two tax cuts that disproportionately benefit large manufacturers and wealthy residents, the manufacturing and agriculture credit, and treating capital gains like ordinary income). Making these changes would allow the state to reinvest $900 million into work, health, and education.

**Federal Cuts to housing programs**

At the federal level, these are the cuts expected to be proposed in the budget (with thanks to Forward Forum for the concise summary):

**Budgets for public housing authorities** are targeted for a $600 million reduction (13%) in operational funding. That means city and state agencies, which provide subsidized housing and vouchers to local residents, would be among the hardest hit.

**Funds for big-ticket repairs at public housing facilities** would be cut by an additional $1.3 billion (about 32%). According to a 2010 HUD report, there already are tens of billions of dollars in backlogged repairs needed for the 1.2 million public housing units in the US.

**The Community Development Block Grant Program**, which has enjoyed bipartisan support in Congress, is budgeted to receive $3 billion this fiscal year. The proposed budget would cut those funds entirely.

**The HOME Investment Partnerships Program**, which provides block grants for local communities to build affordable housing, and Choice Neighborhoods, a program that invests in redeveloping low-income communities, also would be cut.

**Direct rental assistance payments**, including Section 8 Housing and housing vouchers for homeless veterans, would be cut by at least $300 million, to $19.3 billion. Additionally, housing for the elderly, known as the Section 202 program, would be cut by $42 million (nearly 10%). Money available for Native American housing block grants would fall by $150 million (more than 20%).

**Healthcare Cuts**

As we go to print, it has just been announced that the U.S. House of Representatives does not have the votes to pass the revised AHCA bill. MUM will continue to follow the issue. According to recent news reports (Huffington Post, NYT, Washington Post), repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA – aka “Obamacare”) will mean a massive tax cut for America's wealthiest families, while eliminating programs that have allowed millions of poor and middle-class Americans to get health insurance. According to an analysis prepared by the Joint Committee on Taxation and obtained by the New York Times, households with incomes of more than $1 million will receive tax cuts adding up to roughly $157 billion over the next ten years. The windfall to the wealthy will come from two new, closely related taxes that were imposed by the ACA to help finance the law’s coverage expansion. These taxes only affect wealthy individuals and families (individuals and households with incomes above $250,000 for joint filers, and $200,000 for individuals). Previous estimates suggest that 97 percent of Americans do not pay the tax at all, but that for the very wealthiest Americans, including those millionaires, it is worth quite a lot. According to an analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the wealthiest 400 families in the US will get an average tax cut of $7 million per year. The Republican repeal legislation, which its sponsors have called the “American Health Care Act”, will reduce taxes while rolling back the ACA’s expansion of Medicaid and its financial assistance, resulting in a massive shift of funds away from lower-income Americans to the wealthy - thereby further widening the income and wealth gap in the United States. According to the mark up (cost analysis) of the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office that was released on March 13, under the proposed Republican plan 14 million Americans will lose their health insurance in 2018, and another 10 million will lose it by 0224. The changes include tying premium costs to age rather than income, which means the older you get, the higher and less affordable the premiums.

While the Affordable Care Act has had challenges, including dozens of votes by the House to undermine several of its provisions, both access to care and financial security have improved overall, according to

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multiple studies. Prior to the passage of the ACA, medical costs were the leading causes of bankruptcy filings in the US. The proposed House plan to replace the Affordable Care Act includes a tax break for insurance company executives making over $500,000 per year. Companies can generally deduct employee salaries as a business expense but in 2013 the ACA capped the deductions on health insurance executive salaries at $500,000. As one of our Facebook readers posted, “it’s almost as if they are looking for ways to get insurance companies to support their plan.” The average compensation for top health insurance executives is in the millions. In 2014, the Institute for Policy Studies found that the cap imposed by the ACA generated $72 million in additional tax revenue. But the House plan eliminates the cap. As a result, the more health insurance companies pay their executives, the less those executives will pay in taxes (providing them quite literally with millions of reasons to support their plan).

MUM has been trying to cover the very complex and difficult health care debate through our Madison-area Urban Ministry Facebook page, where readers can find more articles about the House bill and its probable impacts. We accept that reasonable people may disagree about how to achieve a stated goal, such as providing health care at affordable cost – a goal supported by citizens across the political spectrum. As this issue of our Dialogue newsletter goes to press, we are aware that legislative proposals are controversial and are changing rapidly. Regardless of whether or not the proposed legislation described in this issue has changed by the time of publication, MUM adamantly supports policies based on evidence. MUM supports budgets that at least attempt to include and address the concerns of all members of society. Our many faith traditions demand no less of us than to support the common good.

**House considering bill allowing employers to mandate genetic testing**

As we are writing this, it has been reported by the Washington Post that House Republicans are preparing a bill that will allow employers to mandate genetic testing for their employees so that employers can use the information for “wellness” considerations. We fear that the intent is to prohibit some employees from gaining access to health coverage under employer plans and that once conducted, genetic test results are likely to follow individuals from one employer to another, from one insurer to another. Mandatory genetic testing of employees raises serious questions, may lead to harmful social outcomes, and requires scrutiny by concerned citizens.

**Civil Rights roll backs**

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions has rolled back protections for transgendered students in our schools. Transgender students are at much higher risk for bullying and suicide. The rollback removes federal mandates that transgender students be allowed to use the bathroom that correlates to their gender. The administration is also looking at other civil rights issues to see where they can roll back protections under the Voting Rights Act and others.

**Complete elimination of funding for Meals on Wheels**

The proposed federal budget includes a complete elimination of funding for the Meals on Wheels program for seniors and veterans.
Across the country the number of hate crimes has increased. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, and other groups that track hate crimes, including Think Progress there has been a steady increase in hate crimes, with a 20% increase in hate crimes in 2016 compared to 2015. According to a February 15th article in the Huffington Post, “reports of anti-Muslim harassment spiked immediately after the election, with some leaders claiming that the President’s rhetoric has emboldened hate groups.” The article also highlighted an increase in anti-Semitism. The Anti-Defamation League, which tracks complaints, reports a significant increase in hate speech against Jewish journalists online. Since the election, several schools and universities reported anti-Semitic vandalism on their campuses. Since January 9th at least 69 bomb threats have been called into 55 Jewish Community Centers across the country.

Rabiah Ahmed, communications director of the Muslim Public Affairs Council, told the Huffington Post that she holds the Trump administration responsible for the increase in hate crimes against Jews, Muslims, and other minorities, including the LGBTQ community and immigrants. The Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect, a Jewish organization, has called for the administration to speak out on the rise of anti-Semitism in the country. The center’s executive director, Steven Goldstein, wrote a long post on Facebook, saying Trump “is beyond the wrong side of history” and warned that he is “driving our nation off a moral cliff.”

In the current atmosphere of hate and political division, MUM will continue to promote respectful dialogue and open civic engagement. Regardless of one’s faith, political views or party affiliation, all people are called to help build an inclusive and peaceful world in which we do not tolerate hate crimes against our neighbors.

We invite you to join MUM in action!

The Journey Home
Monthly Re-Entry Service Fairs
Circles of Support
Mentoring, Family & Reading Connections
Healing House
Just Bakery
Community Dialogue & Advocacy

Standing with the poor and hurting of Dane County…
We are neighbors working together for social change.

Save the date:
MUM’s Annual Meeting
Tuesday, June 20, at 6 p.m. (Location to be announced)
Follow us on Facebook — Sign up for our emails
www.emum.org
Partners for Change
Luncheon 2017

Celebrating 44 years
of inspiring social good and investing in community!

Keynote Speaker:
Judge Everett Mitchell
Circuit Court Judge at the Dane County Courthouse

Master of Ceremonies: Steven Goldberg

Thursday, April 27, 11:30–1:30 • Madison Concourse Hotel, 1 West Dayton Street

MUM’s Just Bakery provided 29,000 hours of training in life skills, math tutoring, food chemistry and commercial baking skills.

The Journey Home provided 22,000 hours of direct service, assisting people in rebuilding their lives after prison.

The Mentoring, Family and Reading Connections program served more than 400 parents, caregivers and children.

MUM staff and volunteers provided 3,310 hours of service through Circles of Support.

Tickets $44 • www.emum.org • 608 256 0906

Thanks to our sponsors!
Please join us!

**PARTNERS FOR CHANGE LUNCHEON**

Thursday, April 27
11:30 - 1:30
The Madison Concourse Hotel

We invite you to celebrate MUM’s 44th Anniversary!

Register: www.emum.org
Details on Page 11

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**Returning Citizens Career Support Fund**

With a huge thank you to an anonymous donor, MUM announces the Returning Citizens Career Support Fund, an educational and vocational assistance fund that will help provide educational expenses for a MUM Circles of Support participant who is pursuing ongoing education. The fund is set up through an endowment with the Madison Community Foundation and will provide its first educational award in 2018.

To be eligible an individual must be actively involved in MUM’s Circles of Support program, or have successfully completed the program and be enrolled (or accepted for enrollment) in a college or vocational education program. The fund will make one award at a time and the award will continue to provide support to the individual for up to 5 years, or completion of their training, whichever comes first. Other eligibility criteria have been established in collaboration with the donor and our Circles of Support Coordinator. We’re very excited about the fund and the potential it has to support continuing education for individuals returning to the community from prison.

If you would like to support this fund, mail donation check payable to Madison Community Foundation, 2 Science Court, Madison, WI 53711, with “MUM Returning Citizens Career Support Fund, ID 8030352” in the memo line.