



**CHURCH WOMEN UNITED OF LANE COUNTY**

**Editor: Phyllis Hockley**

*cwulanecounty.org*

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**FEBRUARY 2024**

**Friday FEBRUARY 2, 2024**

**Episcopal Church of St. John The Divine**

**2537 Game Farm Rd, Springfield, OR 97477**

**10:00 Snacks and Fellowship**

**10:30 Forum: Economic issues through a biblical lens**

**February Forum**

Join this great group of Church Women United of Lane County on Friday, February 2, at 10 a.m. at the Episcopal Church of St John The Divine in Springfield. We will make meaning of economic issues through a biblical lens, guided by Reverend Nancy Gallagher.

The St John The Divine community shares with others a commitment to sharing our blessings with those in diminished circumstances. Each Saturday at 9 a.m. their Shepherd's Pantry welcomes folks to a shared bounty of groceries and essentials. Want to join the sharing? Bring a can of fish, beans, chili, vegetables or fruit. (Find out more about St John's here: <https://www.stjohnspringfield.com/>)

This robust outreach to the homeless puts "legs" to the concept: free market capitalism is NOT the solution. We can each do our part to challenge a system dividing us into the haves and have nots.

Your voice will be heard when you show up. Church Women United of Lane County invites you to join in. Together, we can make a difference in this challenging world.



**SAVE THE DATE: MARCH CELEBRATION**

**On Saturday, March 2 we will gather for the World Day of Prayer Celebration.**

Come celebrate with the magnetic Pastor DeLeesa Meachintubby. The celebration was written together by Palestinian and Christian women and has as its theme Social Justice: Prayerful Action. We will be gathering at St. Mark Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, 1167 Sam Reynolds St., Eugene, OR 97402. Gather for social time at 10 A.M. with the Celebration to follow at 10:30 AM.

**Keep the faith  
To weather the storms of life**



Picture: Mary Sharon Moore



## **JANUARY FORUM CAPITALISM: NOT A LOVE STORY by Charlotte Maloney**

Our January Forum was held on January 5<sup>th</sup> at United Lutheran in Eugene. Fellowship began a little before 10:00 and included an array of fresh fruit, baked goods, and warm beverages displayed by the ladies at United Lutheran. There were 25 in attendance including Pastor Eric. Because Mary Sharon Moore, our new President, had an out-of-town commitment made before she was nominated for the office, Vice President Charlotte Maloney called the meeting to order. She introduced Pastor Eric Dull, who welcomed us, read an endearing story, then led us in an Epiphany prayer.

The land acknowledgement was read by Katharine Hunt, our Secretary. Then Mary Sharon Moore greeted us by video, explaining her absence, declaring we are Beloved, thanking Charlotte for leading in her place, and thanking our speaker, Professor Daniel Pope. Charlotte read the theme for 2024 forums, "Transformative Justice" before introducing Daniel Pope, PhD, Professor Emeritus of History at UO, where he taught courses in American History, Business, and Economic History from 1975 to 2017. His presentation was titled "Capitalism: Not A Love Story." Dr. Pope made many fascinating points, including the possibility of a more humane capitalism than we are experiencing in America now. And there is no one accepted definition of capitalism. An electronic copy of his talk is available at our website: <http://www.cwulanecounty.org/>

After the presentation, we grouped at our round tables and answered the "Building Dialogue in a Polarized World" questions (from Sharon Schuman's book, which we learned about before Covid), exploring some of the concepts of the talk.

Then each table formulated a question for Dr. Pope.

Here are the questions and very brief description of answers.

**Are workers poor because owners are rich?** In some cases, but consider Henry Ford who raised his workers' salaries to \$5/day- exceptionally high at the time. One of his motives was to give workers enough income to buy his Model Ts.

**Is Consumerism relied upon as key to capitalism?** Consumerism, if we define it as a culture where people attempt to satisfy their desires through consumption of commodities, is an important element in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century capitalism. But note that in impoverished regions, more consumption is a very understandable goal, despite environmental costs.

**What is the way forward?** I grew up in a left wing family during the cold war and tended to assume that the USSR was right and the US wrong both in international relations and in economic systems. To think of the USSR as a model for the future was, and is, very wrong. If there are models, Scandinavian countries with high level of welfare measures are attractive. Also Bhutan, which claims to strive to increase "Gross National Happiness."

**What action is possible on climate change with capitalist economy?** Corporate power and the republican party are entrenched in opposition to effective action on Climate Change. Community and grassroots action is needed to combat that. One problem is that some measures to combat Climate Change may threaten valuable public interests, e.g. offshore wind farms may endanger sustainable fisheries.

**Will grassroots action be the answer to improving capitalism or altering it?** It's necessary, but not sufficient. Movements like Black Lives Matter and the Occupy Movement had a real impact, but I think conventional political action (and therefore protection of voting rights, curtailing money in politics, etc.) is needed to complement movements "in the streets."

After announcements and saying the Prayer of Least Coin, we concluded our gathering by singing "Let There Be Peace on Earth," accompanied by our treasurer Nancy Vrijmoet on piano.

## A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Mary Sharon Moore

### The Taproot of Transformative Justice

A consistent theme in my writing and speaking remains the Land of the Rightside Up—the reign of GOD, a world that works for everyone.

So I find myself drawn to the effects of economic injustice, the sticky web of King Mammon, and how my lifestyle must be shaped by “sabbath economics,” spelled out in detail in Leviticus and again in Luke’s Gospel and his account of early church life in the Acts of the Apostles.

Transformative justice, I discover, *asks something of me: either buy into the Financialization of Everything, or creatively resist King Mammon’s sticky web, quietly remove my Consumer nametag, and intentionally live a little closer to those who have no choice but economic distress.*

I’m excited to welcome Rev. Nancy Gallagher to address our Friday, February 2nd forum on the biblical version of economics.

Transformative justice is the path to transformative peace. We each have a role to play, important choices to make, and worthy work to do.

Please, join the conversation! Let’s be healing for the world we touch!

## A LENTEN CALLING

Mary Sharon Moore

Just weeks ago we exchanged warm wishes of Peace to family, friends, and those in our church circles.

And now the eyes of the world are fixed on the International Court of Justice as deliberations begin on the sobering realities of totalizing war, here named genocide.

This naming of brutalities is not a conversation anyone wants. Why? Because it reveals the full-blown tragic outcomes of a world whose first response to injustice, or even the slightest perceived micro-aggression, is complete erasure of those who offend us. Social media is Exhibit A.

We used to call it “going nuclear.” Now, nuclear is a real possibility. How, as humankind, did we get here?

For video game giants, violence is an easy sell, with guaranteed profits—all of it “good for the economy.”

Our culture is now so saturated in violence we no longer feel its corrosive effects.

This Lenten season I feel called to “sit inside the sin of the world” and pray with all my heart for an anointing of Spirit upon witnesses today: for scholars, lawyers, and truth tellers; for prophets, whistleblowers, investigative journalists; and for all who courageously bear costly witness to Truth, Justice, and to the Peace of our hidden yet very present GOD-who-is-Love.

I don’t know what this Lenten calling means, to *sit inside the sin of the world, nor what it will ask of me. I can only enter into it, shed all threads of violence, be changed, and journey with the nonviolent Jesus, to the end. And then, beyond.*

Will you join me?



**AVERY MCRAE  
AWARDED  
APPRECIATION  
FOR 10 YEARS  
AS CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
ACTIVIST**

**By  
Nancy Vrijmout**

Here is an update you won't want to miss. Last month your CWU board was thrilled to catch up with Climate Activist Avery McRae, ongoing litigant in one of our nation's most high profile climate change lawsuits.

You will remember Avery's description of her journey as one of twenty-one plaintiffs in the Juliana v. United States lawsuit. Her story captivated members at our kick-off forum for 2023. Just eight years old when she joined forces with the others, 18-year-old South Eugene High Senior Avery McRae challenged us to get involved. Parallel student-driven lawsuits in Montana and Hawaii were, at that time, pending.

The urgent nationwide movement propelled by these spirited kids demands clean air and water for us all. The health of our planet is at stake. We must replace fossil fuels with clean energy sources, if we are to survive.

Avery's determination shines even brighter today. She's midway through her freshman year at Eckerd College in St Petersburg, Florida. How was that transition to a new state? Well, Avery's been through one evacuation so far. With fellow students she dodged a close encounter with a hurricane.

This small liberal arts college is the perfect place to meet a variety of people, hone her skills and expand her horizons.

On a chilly January morning President Mary Sharon Moore and board members Charlotte Maloney, Anne O'Brien and I were pleased Avery's family could join us at Vero Coffeehouse to celebrate Avery's ten years of activism.



Holly McRae is the Events and Outreach Manager at McKenzie River Trust. Matt McRae, an EWEB commissioner, is the Long Term Disaster Recovery Manager for Lane County.

While one of Matt's projects is helping those in recovery from the Holiday Farm fire of 2020, Holly works with her team repairing and improving our environment throughout the state. That team's signature Lane County project has brought recovery to spawning salmon up the McKenzie River near Finn Rock. Taking responsibility for the care of our natural environment is, clearly, a family priority. How intriguing!

Avery's description of college life in Florida was vivid. And, as you can see from the photo, she was humble, as always, when Mary Sharon presented her with the certificate. But those sitting at the table with Avery McRae couldn't help but feel awe at her sense of purpose. She grows ever stronger as an advocate for change. Who knows what will be next for this amazing young woman?

Meanwhile, as 2024 unfolds, savor the growing success of these young climate change leaders. Working in tandem with Our Children's Trust, the Montana kids won their suit last August. Ongoing contracts promoting the development of fossil fuel sources were found to violate the Montana state constitution. The Hawaii kids' suit, pushing back against air pollution due to the use of internal combustion engines, will be next to go to trial.

And despite pushback from the US Supreme Court, last June in US District Court in Eugene, Judge Ann Aiken gave the green light to a slightly reworded Juliana v. United States lawsuit. We now await a trial date. A major turning point. A refusal to take "no" for an answer!

We are thankful for the commitment of Avery and her twenty fellow activists, as roadblocks to success fall away, one by one. Their cause is, indeed, ours.

Congratulations on ten years staying the course. Bravo, Avery!



## **TORAH STUDY**

**by Trudie Atkinson**

**Open the Hebrew Scriptures to the Book of Joshua:**

**Chapter 6: Joshua and his troops storm the town of Jericho to enter the Promised Land with great exultation. Subsequently they kill all the inhabitants; entire families, along with their animals, are slain and their bodies burned with all their material possessions.**

**Chapter 7: Joshua orders that the same devastating treatment be inflicted on one of the Israelite families, whose head, Achan, is accused of disobeying a divine command. He and his family are stoned to death; their bodies, those of their animals and all their possessions are burned.**

**How do these stories have meaning for us in Twenty-first Century America? It is my continuing quest to discover and refine the answer to that question, (A note of explanation: while it is called "Torah Study," the texts discussed have ranged far beyond the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures, even to the Gospel of Matthew.)**

**On any Friday morning we are 8-12 people meeting on Zoom: a core group from North Carolina, joined by individuals from other states like Tennessee, Florida, Georgia and Oregon. Occasionally, when on the road some have even tuned in from other countries. We are Orthodox, rabbinic and secular Jews; Christians and former Christians, agnostic and atheist; we come together to find meaning in ancient texts, giving deep attention to stories retold for millennia. Some of our members are experts in relevant sciences and languages, and some with expertise in human behavior. And every one brings unique lived experience and perspective to their approach to the text. Much like CWU's motto, we differ respectfully in our quest for understanding.**

**It's a bit of a stretch for me to be awake and alert at 8:00 am to join the conversation, yet I have found it valuable enough to attend for most of the past three years. Over that time the scriptural texts, like all important writing, have unfolded for us stories of how we human beings behave toward one another, especially in our many forms of scapegoating and violence fueled by envy. And yet, we see again and again how we keep being called back to care for one another.**



**WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER**  
**Plan For a Year of Helping Others**  
**in 2024**  
**by Nancy Vrijmoet**

**Whether skidding over icy streets or watching the sleet come down from your window, we know you have the needs of others on your mind. Join your Church Women United friends by putting your membership in our movement at the top of your list.**

**We'll welcome your unit membership check at Post Office Box 5824, Eugene, Oregon 97405. Or send it my way, at 42091 McKenzie Highway, Springfield, Oregon 97478. Many have already taken us up on our suggestion. Find the envelope mailed to you with last month's issue of The Vine, and enclose \$65 or a smaller amount. Remember that it is not how much you send, but the fact that you do send it, that counts! Call or text me at 541.345.5554 if you prefer Venmo. Not a problem!**

**There is a year of taking action waiting for you, in our unique ecumenical CWU community. Let us, together, keep in our sights mothers far away, struggling to keep their children safe. We can only hope that, somehow, we'll have a chance to help all return home to warmth and comfort. Be well and remember that you are loved.**

## ISSUE UPDATES by Charlotte Maloney

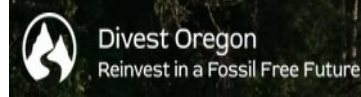
### Eugene Emergency Care Coalition

Please recall that our local coalition consists of representatives from Oregon Nurses Association, HCAO, Democratic Socialists of America, Teamsters, Eugene Springfield Solidarity Network, CAHOOTS, Fire and Rescue, and others. Now, in addition to our local Coalition responding to PeaceHealth closing the University District facility December 1, there is action at the legislature. Rep. Nancy Nathanson and others, are working on 2 bills to address this problem for the future.

**Did You Sign These Petitions in January Vine?**  
If you meant to sign the three petitions in last month's Vine- Supporting No Longer Allowing Concealed Carry on UO Campus, Supporting 4,500 University classified workers throughout Oregon, Letter of Support to the UO Task Force Considering Replacing Natural Gas Boilers with Electric Boilers- but never got around to it, please consider looking at last edition to click to sign.

### Oregon Universal Health Care Governance Board

Governor Kotek had appointed all the members of the board. The board is now deciding who the Executive Director will be from the 3 vetted applicants.



### DIVEST OREGON

The Divest Oregon coalition continues to meet monthly with many work groups meeting more frequently, plus presenting testimony at every meeting of the Oregon Investment Council, which is about every 6 weeks. In addition this month, Lobby Day was held on January 10th. One hundred Divest Oregon members (includes those who attended meetings via Zoom) visited 45 legislators of the upcoming legislative session as their constituents. The objective was to educate and gain support for the COAL Act, Clean Oregon Assets Legislation Act 2024, described last month in The Vine. Oregon currently holds \$1 Billion in coal companies! The Strategy Work Group has met with Treasurer Read's staff 3 times to discuss the wording of the bill to avoid his opposition during last session to the previous, more complex bill. The language of the bill is based upon a successful California fossil fuel divestment bill and a successful Oregon bill, which divested and prevented future investments in Sudanese ventures. The bill doesn't have a bill number yet.

The day after Lobby Day, Read presented his "Net-Zero Plan" to a hearing of the House Interim Committee on Emergency Management, General Governance, and Veterans Committee. The plan acknowledges that the climate crisis must be a component in risk assessment to assure maximum returns on future investments. He set the goal of zero carbon emissions by 2050. He included methodology to measure achievement and promised transparency in reporting mechanisms. He reported in a survey of PERS recipients, 89% favored managing for "highest returns."

At the January 24<sup>th</sup> OIC meeting, the coalition will present recorded statements by two internationally respected experts from the United Nations High-level Expert Group on Net Zero Emissions. The speakers will provide resources in evaluation of Treasurer Read's plan.

With Treasurer Read not running for re-election, the two announced candidates are still scheduled for a forum in April. You can always find more information at the website: [www.divestoregon.org](http://www.divestoregon.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Breakfast at Brails**  
**1689 Willamette St.**  
**Wednesday February 7th 9am**  
**Food and discussion of February Forum**  
**Join us!**

### LET'S DO JUSTICE

Next week marks three years since the UN's Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force. The TPNW has 69 States parties while 28 other states have signed but not yet ratified. This means that a total of 97 states (or 49.2 percent of all states) have accepted binding obligations in international law under the TPNW. Only two more signatures or accessions are needed to pass 50 percent. Unfortunately, the United States has not signed. Pax Christi USA will host an online forum on the need to address nuclear weapons on January 27, from 2-4 p.m. Eastern Time.

**CHURCH WOMEN UNITED**

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ECUMENICAL  
MINISTRIES  
OF OREGON



**Unitarian Universalist Church Eugene Oregon**  
1685 W. 11th Ave. Eugene Oregon 97402

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's eleventh annual Oregon Interfaith Earth Summit will take place in faith communities across Oregon, including Unitarian Universalist Church Eugene!

Join us at 1pm on Sunday, February 4 to engage in conversations about community and climate resilience and finding hope in the face of the climate crisis. Gather to watch keynote speakers through a Zoom plenary session, followed by local programming.

**Register at:**  
<https://emoregon.org/event/earth-summit-2024/>



For more information, contact Sue Craig at gmail.com.