



CHURCH WOMEN UNITED OF LANE COUNTY

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[cwulanecounty.org](http://cwulanecounty.org)

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

FEBRUARY 2021

FEBRUARY FORUM  
Friday, February 5

We are very pleased to be welcoming Rabbi Ruhi Sophia Motzkin Rubenstein of Temple Beth Israel in Eugene. You have probably seen her thoughtful Opinion pieces in the Register Guard. Any of you who have had the good fortune to hear her speak know that she can really open some eyes and bring us a viewpoint that we don't often have the opportunity to see or hear. We'll be zooming on Friday, February 5 at 9:30. Below is the invitation.

Click on the link as early as 9:15.  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82976163645>

Meeting ID: 829 7616 3645

One tap mobile

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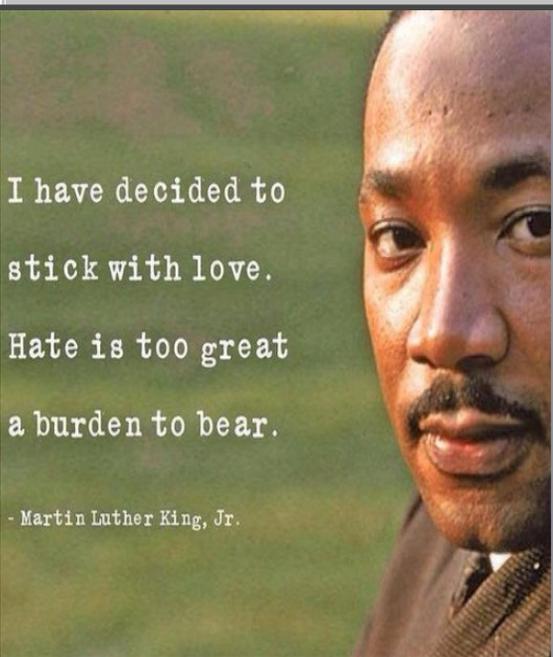
[+1 929 205 6099](tel:+19292056099) US (New York)

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82976163645>

**LOOKING FORWARD TO MARCH  
World Day of Prayer Celebration**

This is one of our 3 yearly celebrations and will take place on Saturday, March 6, at 9:30. The service has been planned by women of Vanuatu, a group of islands located in the South Pacific. Our speaker will be Mary Sharon Moore.

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## WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Anne O'Brien

All plans I had for a message this month were swept aside when I saw this prayer for our new president and vice president that the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas sent to our new President and Vice President and I must share that at this time.

Blessing of President Joseph Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris from the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas.

In your leading, Mercy.

In your decisions, Wisdom.

In your actions, Justice.

In your governing, Integrity.

In each encounter, Awe.

In each embrace, Welcome.

In all suffering, Tenderness.

In all conflict, Peace.

In all despair, Hope.

For your loved ones, Joy.

For your own heart, Love.

For your fidelity, Gratitude.

For your service, Blessing.

For the United States of America,  
May Unity, Hope, and Fullness of Life for  
all prevail.

We pray this blessing in God's most Holy  
Name. Amen.

And Amen again.

## A LOOK AT OUR JANUARY FORUM

Anne O'Brien

On January 8<sup>th</sup> we welcomed Eric Richardson, Executive Director of NAACP of Lane County, to our Forum.

Eric tied the history of our African brothers and sisters beginning in Africa, to our present day conditions, including how the balance of power in our country includes a distrust of putting Black and Brown people in positions of leadership. He pointed out that our power brokers are by and large implementing a minority rule as they do this. He reminded us that some of our most articulate leaders today are persons of color, including Keisha Lance Bottoms, mayor of Atlanta, Stacey Abrams, founder of Fair Fight, Letitia James, attorney general of the state of New York, Michelle Lujan Grisham, Latina governor of New Mexico, and I would add, our Vice President, Kamala Harris.

Eric told us about current Lane County NAACP partnerships: Food for Lane County, HIV Alliance (this is new fiscal sponsor), Beyond Toxics, and the Science Center, where 40 first through fifth graders are being served for morning study slots and science camp in the afternoon plus tutors who work with students in grades 6-12. Other connections: Our Redeemer Lutheran, Annie Mims community.

Working toward climate justice, a committee meeting takes place at 10 a.m. on Mondays each week (see website for info). The housing committee meets at 1 p.m. each Thursday. They are supporting two bills in coordination with Beyond Toxics: HB 2488, a land use bill; the ECJ Resolution being advanced in the Oregon legislature. The NAACP's goal is to embed environmental justice principles into legislation. Perhaps you remember our Beyond Toxics speaker several years ago, talking about how our local communities of color suffer most from our most harmful environmental issues.

Here in Eugene they are putting environmental protection philosophies into practice with a model solar collection installation at the Mims House. Participation helping with this as well as helping as a food pantry worker for food distribution (in program partnering with Food for Lane County) were two opportunities for involvement that Eric mentioned. He also told us to check the website to see which committee meetings we might want to attend each week.

We also heard about upcoming events held in honor of Martin Luther King's birthday during January. He sent us a list of all the committees we could choose to join. Please email me if you would like me to email that list of committees/times. [aobdob@pacinfo.com](mailto:aobdob@pacinfo.com)

THE OREGON HOUSING ALLIANCE  
Majeska Seese-Green

Our unit of CWU is a member organization in the Oregon Housing Alliance (HA). I was honored to represent us in the virtual Membership Meeting held January 14-15. We heard a preview of the upcoming legislative session from our HA lobbyist and updates from each of the workgroups. (See end for more about HA.)

Following the Membership Meeting, each member organization could vote on the legislative proposals that had been presented. All of the proposals that were ready to be considered by the membership were approved. (Following further voting, there will be additions and likely prioritizations as resources will become an issue during the session.)

The 2021 Housing Opportunity Agenda as of January 25 includes these recommendations to support more Oregonians to access opportunity through safe, stable, and affordable housing:

Prevent and End Homelessness (HB 5011) [the Legislature should commit \$50 million to two programs]; Property Tax Exemption, Updates for affordable housing (HB 2456); Property Tax Exemption, sunset extension (HB 2446/SB 155); Preserve and Maintain existing affordable housing (SB 5534); Increasing our supply of safe, stable, and affordable housing across Oregon (SB 5505/SB 5506); Foreclosure Moratorium & Foreclosure Counseling; and Oregon Individual Development Account (IDA) Initiative (HB 2551).

In addition to HA's priority agenda, HA endorses additional proposals: Youth Homelessness (HB 2544); Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Pilot Program; Home Ownership Limited Tax Exemption (HB 2456); and Expanding the Definition of Veterans (HB 2094).

Of note for us, the Youth Homelessness bill is from Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, of which CWU of Lane County is also a member. About HB 2544: "Oregon has one of the highest rates of youth homelessness, including youth in the K-12 system, youth exiting the foster care system, and unaccompanied youth. The Legislature should invest resources to expand the host home network, which provides a home for unaccompanied homeless youth while they finish high school; and expand existing shelter, mental health, transitional housing, and other services for Runaway and Homeless Youth." The bill authorizes Department of Human Services to award two-year grants to organizations that provide services to unaccompanied homeless youth and to organizations that operate host home projects for unaccompanied homeless youth.

Also of note about HA: "One goal [...] is to be explicit about the racial disparities that exist within our housing system both in Oregon and nationally. We know that racial disparities exist across our housing system. People of color are more likely to experience homelessness and housing instability, and more likely to rent their home, and people of color are less likely to own their home, all due to systemic racism and intentional barriers erected to maintain housing segregation. Being explicit about the disparities that exist in our housing system, and how our policy proposals may address those disparities is part of our work to move us towards a racial equity framework as a coalition."

The HA workgroups are: Homelessness and Tenant Protections; Development, Land Use, and Preservation; and Homeownership and Asset Building. Workgroups are meeting virtually, where a lot of deep in-the-weeds wonky sharing and discussion and processing takes place for later presentations to the whole membership for decisions. (Interested in observing or participating? Let me or Anne O'Brien know.)

What is the Housing Alliance? The HA "brings together advocates [e.g. CWU], local governments, housing authorities, community development corporations, environmentalists, service providers, business interests and all other dedicated to increasing the resources available to meet our housing needs to support a common statewide legislative and policy agenda." Info: [oregonhousingalliance.org](https://oregonhousingalliance.org)

## OUR HOMELESS NEIGHBORS NEED YOUR HELP

Nancy Vrijmout

In December Church Women United of Lane County responded to the dire situation facing local residents without shelter. The Emergency Homeless Advocacy Committee formed. A copy of the letter this group sent to city, county and state officials was included in your last issue of *The Vine*. While written responses to that letter have been less than overwhelming, when a call went out for contributions to help our homeless neighbors, members of our unit and friends sent donations with lightning speed. By the first week of January, \$1,910 made its way into the jar. The help began.

How best to provide this help? We formed a partnership with non-profit Carry It Forward, whose co-directors, Arwen Maas-DeSpain and Kris McAlister, know first-hand the needs of those without stable housing. On-the-ground services they offer include distributing winter warming supplies and hygiene items (including n-95 masks), helping folks get laundry done, and providing showers. Individuals who need assistance navigating government agencies or the legal system can depend on Carry It Forward to guide them. Banking, accessing the post office, and connecting to help are just three non-starters for those without a stable home, address and connections. Carry It Forward responds to needs as they are uncovered.



Partnering with Sheltercare, Carry It Forward has opened the Garden SPOT, a 24/7 non-congregate emergency shelter with transitional services, specifically designed for those who are medically fragile. The ten residents there are expected to develop goals and transition to stable housing within a six- to eight-month period. Other partners include Ebbert United Methodist Church, with whom Carry It Forward developed the showers service, called the Willamette Area Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program, operating in Springfield. In turn, Carry It Forward extends its services to those whose needs have been identified by other agencies, including White Bird, Occupy Medical, and HIV Alliance.

On January 14, Arwen and Kris from Carry It Forward shared details of their program at a Zoom presentation. If you missed that event, follow the link below to view the recording. Use the passcode

**4lSjn+%**. (Please note those characters are: four, lowercase L, uppercase S, uppercase J, lowercase n, the plus sign, the percentage sign, and a period. Don't leave out the period! And don't mistake the L for a one.) [https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/EhqJ8m9af5WhkjHb\\_NkKjMvRDzs1evHcdL48shqSF1UqgGHPAeIKLotgek-4bvbpYi-5mjdZgPv\\_bjO3](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/EhqJ8m9af5WhkjHb_NkKjMvRDzs1evHcdL48shqSF1UqgGHPAeIKLotgek-4bvbpYi-5mjdZgPv_bjO3)

The jar is not yet full. More folks need our help. Carry It Forward receives 100% of the amount you contribute. Send a check to Treasurer Nancy Vrijmoet at 42091 McKenzie Highway, Springfield, Oregon 97478. Write your check to Church Women United, with the memo "Emergency Homeless Fund."



We may not solve every need, but we CAN make a difference, little by little, in these difficult times. Read more about Carry It Forward at their website:

<http://www.carryitforward.net/>

## CHURCH WOMEN UNITED MEMBERSHIP 2021 UPDATE

Nancy Vrijmoet

January has arrived, and with it another year of dynamic events for Church Women United. Renew your membership, or join for the first time. What will you support?

- Our unit's robust partnership with Oregon Housing Alliance, Health Care for All Oregon, Rural Organizing Project, and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Honorariums for those who bring their message to us at seven Friday forums and three Saturday celebrations
- Program expenses, including mailing and printing, keeping every member engaged, regardless of ability to connect electronically
- Yearly dues to state and national CWU, keeping hope alive through our many connections

While we cannot wait for a return to "in person" fellowship, for now your participation on Zoom is crucial. Our unit pays a small fee for use of the Zoom format. What you send will help cover that, as well.

The suggested yearly membership has been dropped from \$50 to \$45, due to the fact that a yearbook for 2021 cannot be printed and distributed. Adjust the amount you send, on a "sliding scale," if a lesser amount meets your budget. We will appreciate your contribution, and use it wisely.

Please send your check to Treasurer Nancy Vrijmoet, 42091 McKenzie Highway, Springfield, OR 97478.

Call Nancy at 541.345.5554 if you have a question about your membership, or would like help staying connected. Remember, YOU add the spice to the mix. The outlook for 2021 is bright. Happy New Year!



### RACISM

#### Suggested Reading List

- Coates, Ta-Nehisi "Between The World And Me"  
Cone, James H. "The Cross And The Lynching Tree"  
Jennings, Willie James "The Christian Imagination - Theology And  
The Origins Of Race"  
Oluo, Ijeoma "So You Want To Talk About Race"  
Saad, Layla F. "Me And White Supremacy"  
Wilkerson, Isabel "The Warmth of Other Suns"  
Wilkerson, Isabel "Caste"  
Rothstein, Richard "The Color of Law"  
McBride, James "The Color of Water"



**NATIONAL CWU NEWS  
WIN WEDNESDAY - RESUMES ON FEB. 3RD, 2021**

**Katharine Hunt**

**During 2020 women from around the country met on Wednesdays to discuss RAW and REAL topics. The virtual gatherings were an hour long beginning at 10 AM PST. Guest speakers were from all walks of life.**

**You will have the opportunity to join once again with others for Prayer, Discussion and Action on Wednesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10 AM. Information on how to join the Zoom gathering will be shared on the National Church Women United website.**

**UNITED AGAINST HUNGER - National Church Women United 2021**

**Agreed to Differ ~ Resolved to Love ~ United to Serve**

**“For I was hungry and you gave me food. “ Matt: 25;35**

**CWU Units across the nation are encouraged to donate and /or volunteer your time as you are able to help alleviate hunger. Lane County CWU Unit has answered this call. An Emergency Homeless Advocacy Action Committee was organized and a special fund set up for people to contribute to for an outreach project. CWU members heard the invitation and funds were raised in 2020. It was decided that these funds would be sent to a local group that is working with the unsheltered: Carry It Forward. The Unit through the generosity of members of our movement was able to send \$1,570 to Carry It Forward in 2020.**

**Now we are in 2021 and we are carrying this project forward. You are encouraged to share this information with others in your faith community. Checks may be made out to CWU of Lane County and sent to our treasurer with CWU Emergency Fund in the memo line.**

**Please share other ways that you and others in your faith community are reaching out to our neighbors who are unsheltered or needing a helping hand due to the effects of COVID-19 and or the fires we suffered in the fall. Please send Katharine Hunt [keehhunt@gmail.com](mailto:keehhunt@gmail.com) information and photos as she is writing a report for National CWU.**

**PRAYER IN DARK TIMES**

**Mary Sharon Moore**

**Lord Jesus, risen Christ, your Apostle Paul affirms that where sin and darkness abound, grace abounds even more.**

**In these dark times we stand firm in our conviction that the power that flows from your resurrection penetrates into the most dark and needful places.**

**Keep us mindful of the difference between righteousness and self-righteousness.**

**May we seek not so much the moral high road as the common path of understanding, generosity, and fraternal solidarity.**

**In this new year send us forth as your light, and with courageous hearts, into this world which you still so love.**

**In your holy name we pray.**

**Amen**