

Dialogue

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

Winter 2012

Altars and sacrifice

Altars are a powerful symbol across faith traditions. Most of the world's religions have at some time constructed and used altars as a place of sacrifice, a place of worship, a place to signify where we see God, a place of remembrance, a structure built to represent God's presence. We read of the creation of altars in Exodus 17:15, I Sam. 14:35. Altars were to be built of earth or stone and stones had to be unhewn, stones over which no iron tool had been used (Ex. 20:23-25). The prohibition for using iron in creating a temple is explained in the Talmud, The Mishnah elaborates: "for iron was created to shorten man's days, while the altar was created to lengthen man's days; what shortens may not rightly be lifted up against what lengthens" (Mid. 3:4).

Do we still build altars? Do we still make sacrifices at our altars?

Is Wall Street an American-built altar? We have become a country that worships individualism as opposed to the common good. We have come to worship the accumulation of wealth without labor; we have sacrificed ethics and morality in the pursuit of wealth. How else could we as a country possibly explain the meltdown of the financial and housing industries in this country? How else can we possibly explain the growing number of individuals and families living in poverty at a time when the income disparity between

rich and poor is beyond comprehension and yet candidates for office worry about the effects of tax increases on the top one percent?

We have built prison altars. Buildings made of stone, created by tools designed to shorten man's days. There can be no other way to describe spending what we are told are scarce public resources to build stone buildings designed to warehouse the poor, people of color, the addicted, those with mental illness. We have elected

**...it behooves us
to be careful what we worship, for
what we are worshipping we are
becoming.**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

politicians who upon this altar have sacrificed their belief in redemption and forgiveness.

Candidates for office offer their vision of a shining city on a hill, language intended to invoke images of a country blessed by God. The Prophet Isaiah (58:6-7, 10) said, "I'll tell you what it really means to worship the Lord. Remove the chains of prisoners who are chained unjustly. Free those who are abused! Share your food with everyone who is hungry; share your

home with the poor and homeless. Give clothes to those in need; don't turn away your relatives.... Give your food to the hungry and care for the homeless. Then your light will shine in the dark; your darkest hour will be like the noonday sun." Where is the candidates' altar? Where do they find God? Who or what are they willing to sacrifice upon their altar?

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote "A person will worship something – have no doubt about that. We may think our tribute is paid in secret in the dark recesses of our hearts – but it will out.

That which dominates our imaginations and our thoughts will determine our lives, and character.

Therefore, it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping we are becoming."

Those of us who attended the Homeless Persons'

Memorial Service might well have felt at that moment as though we were standing at an altar. Standing on the Capital Square, slightly elevated from the sidewalk, it was a place where many of us could see God in the eyes of those standing across from us. It was a place where we could feel the pain and sorrow of those whom we as a society have sacrificed upon altars that were made to worship something other than God.

In faith,
Linda Ketcham

Longest Night National Homeless Persons' Memorial Service

On December 21st Madison's Longest Night Homeless Persons' Memorial Service was held on the capitol square. Over 120 individuals gathered to remember our neighbors who died without a permanent home. Some of them died on the streets of Madison, some in basements of abandoned homes and buildings, or sleeping on a friends couch, or in one of our shelters.

The commemoration was organized by MUM, Madison Homeless Initiative, Community Action Coalition, Lake Edge United Church of Christ, Lakeview Lutheran Church, Christ the Solid Rock Baptist Church, and First Congregational United Church of Christ. We gathered in meditation and prayer, a lifting up of the names of those we have lost, and we ended by walking with those among us who would be sleeping at the Men's Shelter at Grace Episcopal Church. Many of those participating brought gloves, hats, long underwear, blankets and warm socks to donate to the shelter for distribution to the men at the shelter.

The following names were read or said aloud at the Longest Night Homeless Persons' Memorial Service held on December 21st, 2011. These

men, women and children were our neighbors, members of this community. They were sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, partners and friends. They are loved and missed:

William "Billy" Briggs (Dec. 23, 2011), Eric Manley, John Odorski, Billy Cobb, Chad Edgar, Alexander Asari, Michael Boullock, Dave Moore, Ryan Scott, Jessie, Zachary Rogers, Cosmo Bob Hicks, Kirk Kirky, Jimmy Jones, Tony Boley, Richie Aldridge, Lil Punker Davis, Opie Nate, Scottie Baseball, Doug Wells, Vern Fulon, Papa Bear, Fred Lavarro, Jessie Wyman, Nikki Gaziano, Gha, CoCo, Laura Borman, Jamyra Cobbins, Bam, Sedres Sargent, Tom Sundahi (Big Tom), Joseph "Jojo"

Powers, David "Nick" Stone, Felton James, DeLloyd McCoy, Trevor Koch, John "Pete" Beck, Pat Ratslif, Lady Arlene, Billy Sampson, Dwayne Benjamin Warren, My friend Tommy, Jim Lee, Doc Robert, Allen Smith, Chad Eggert, Alexander Kwiek-rysari, Ken Maurer.

MUM thanks the Salvation Army, Mark Wilson and the men and women of Bethel Lutheran's Book Club for assisting to compile this list. We also thank the individuals who attended the vigil and shared the names of those they have lost. MUM also thanks Dane County Supervisor Melissa Sargent for reading these names, remembering these individuals during the January 19th County Board meeting.

G.I.G. meeting Greater Isthmus Group

Meets 3rd Thursdays
Immanuel Lutheran Church
1021 Spaight Street, 8:30-10 a.m.

For further information contact
Barbara McKinney, MUM Assoc.
Director, at barbara@emum.org
or 256-0906.

GIG is a roundtable work group that meets monthly to address critical issues around housing stability for all persons. Representatives from the various faith communities and other groups come together to work on common concerns that impact affordable housing for all.

Please send a representative.

MUM in the NEWS

- **WORT.fm.org** : 8:00 o'clock Buzz 12/16 & 1/6 podcasts
- **spectrummadison.com** : Partners in Change
- **madison.com/wsj/news/opinion/mailbag** : Longest Night Memorial Service: Honor lost homeless on longest night.
- **madisonvoices.com** : SB 207 Remedy in Search of a Problem
- **wtdy.com/content/IN-Business** : Linda Ketcham and Tom Woodmansee, Community Against Violence, aired 12/21/11
- **progressive.org/scott_walker_civil_rights.html** : Walker and His Henchmen Try Rolling Back More Civil Rights Protections
- **madisoncommons.org** : Madison-area Urban Ministry helps children of incarcerated parents find stability, 12/14/11
- **themic921.com** : The People's Mic with Doug Cunningham, 12/29

United Way



**United Way
of Dane County**

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. Give online or mail gifts to MUM.



2300 S. Park St. #2202
Madison, WI 53713
PH (608)256-0906
FX (608) 256-4387
www.emum.org

Senate Bill 207 Update

As we write this, Senate Bill 207 and its corresponding Assembly Bill 286 have both been passed out of their respective legislative committees (in November 2011) however neither bill has been scheduled on the floor for a vote. These two bills would overturn nearly forty years of fair employment standards and would allow an employer to refuse to hire, or terminate from employment, anyone with an unpardoned felony conviction. At the Senate level MUM has been very active in working to prevent this bill from being scheduled for a vote. We

have met with Senators on both sides of the isle to share with them our concerns about the bill. In each legislative body there is a committee responsible for scheduling bills for vote. In the Senate it is the Senate Organizational Committee. We have been working with our own faith community network and supporters along with a national religious coalition, the Workers' Rights Center, to prevent this bill from passing. Below are excerpts from the testimony provided by MUM's Executive Director at the Senate Committee on Labor, Public Safety and Urban Affairs on October 24th, 2011:

"Madison-area Urban Ministry is a private faith based non-profit agency

founded in 1971. We have been working with men and women returning to the community from prison since 2002. Additionally we have been working with children of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated parents since 2000.

Our programs, Circles of Support, the Journey Home and Windows to Work and the Phoenix Initiative all focus on assisting individuals in rebuilding their lives after incarceration. The ability to obtain and retain employment is one of the key factors to successful reintegration to the community. These programs and many

similar programs around the state are based on solid research and evidence based practices about what works in corrections.

We stand opposed to Senate Bill 207 because it is bad corrections policy. It does will not increase public safety and indeed the bill contradicts the focus and goals of the WI Department of Corrections' efforts to reduce recidivism in our state.

It seems to us that this bill is a remedy in search of a problem while creating a host of new problems for already struggling families in our communities. In testimony offered before the Assembly Committee on Labor and Workforce Development proponents of this bill could offer no evidence that

these types of complaints and lawsuits are widespread.

The reality is that the introduction of WI Circuit Court Access Program (CCAP) has already led to large numbers of men and women with convictions never getting past the application process. Employers receive an application and can immediately look the individual up on CCAP and throw the application away. Without a tracking mechanism CCAP has allowed employers to already screen out people with convictions. But what about the men and women who have employment, who have been working for years and are now suddenly at risk because of an unpardoned conviction? They have served their sentence; they have become a contributing member of the community. At what point do we stop punishing them?"



Local foundations support MUM's work

MUM thanks the following foundations for their contributions toward MUM's social justice work. We depend upon local support to help sustain our programs.

The Bon-Ton Stores Community Days

Capital Kids Fund

Endres Foundation

The Evjue Foundation, Inc.

Madison Rotary Foundation

Oakwood Lutheran Homes Association, Inc.

Telephone & Data Systems, Inc. (TDS)

**THANKS!
AND MORE
THANKS!**

Wisconsin Democracy Campaign tracks political money trail

One need only look to the millions of dollars flowing into our state from around the country related to the upcoming recall elections in Wisconsin (and of course the Super Pac dollars flowing into the national elections) to see the threat to our democracy. In Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign has a wonderful website and blog that helps trace the money while connecting the dots between money, politics and policy. Visit them at: www.wdc.org.

Mentoring Connections participant selected to be ambassador

By Fabu Carter

I'd like to introduce our Dialogue Readers to Katalina Sanchez, who has been selected for a very special honor at her school, Crestwood Elementary. Her mother writes about her:

"Katalina Sanchez, age 10, has been involved with Mentoring Connections for the last five years. She is a child that has prevailed despite difficulties in every area in her life. She manages to have fun and Katalina has been a member of the East YMCA Swim Team for three years, serves on the student council at Crestwood Elementary, and has ambitions of starting a non-profit organization to help homeless children in our area.

Katalina's life has not been easy to say the least. When Katalina was 4 years old her biological father abandoned the family suddenly and after a couple of months he was incarcerated for six years. Katalina was very close to her father and this was very hard on her, being the oldest child in the home. With the help of people who love her, including her mentor, Katalina is a happy child.

This year we received a letter from the People to People Ambassador Program that Katalina was nominated and then selected as a delegate to be a U.S. Student Ambassador and that she would have the opportunity to go overseas to England and France for 14



Katalina, a Mentoring Connections participant, has excelled inspite of life challenges.

days at the end of June 2012.

This will be a life-changing experience for her and will only help her understand the world better. This opportunity means that this little girl will have a wonderful adventure that will assist her in being a well-rounded and well-travelled person as she grows up. I have four children to care for and the trip costs \$5,500. As Katlina's parent, I realize that this is a great deal of money. I am looking for a few companies or caring individuals to help sponsor her on her journey. In

return, Katalina would be more than happy to come and present to the company, in front of a group, or at MUM events, sharing all her experiences and what she got out of this amazing opportunity. "

The People to People Ambassadors Programs serve as a global educational travel provider and promote opportunities for direct interaction by students, educators and professionals. The mission of People to People ambassadors is "to bridge cultural and political borders through education and exchange, making the world a better place for future generations." Student Ambassador Programs offer international educational opportunities for students in grades 5-12. For detailed information about People to People Ambassadors see: www.peopletopeople.com or view the student application booklet at www.ptpmeeting.com.

To give your support for Katalina's journey, donations in Katalina's name can be mailed to People to People Office of Admissions, P.O. Box 34902, Seattle, WA 98124-1902; or to donate online visit <https://payment.peopletopeople.com>. Be sure to include Katalina's last name, Sanchez, and her Delegate Identification Number, 10142570, with your donation.

Funny? 

In response to Mitt Romney's comment in an interview with Soledad O'Brien that "I'm not really very concerned about the very poor because they have a safety net," comedian Jon Stewart replied "nets are bad, whether you're a dolphin, a butterfly or a human. If you find yourself in a net then something has gone terribly wrong."



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.

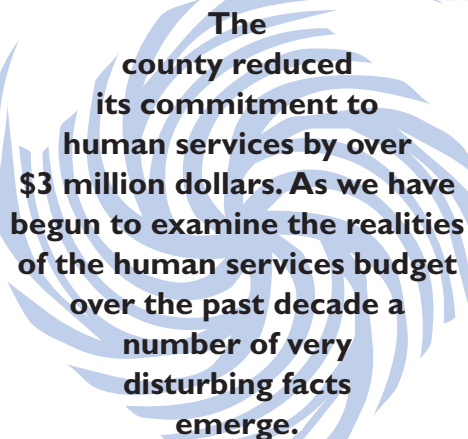
Dane County budget cuts human services

You may have seen the press event, you may have read the press release, all designed to spin the fact that the County Executive and County Board cut over two million dollars from the County Human Services Budget into good news by emphasizing the restoration of just under two million in cuts. The reality is that once again Dane County has cut away at the safety net. There is no way to spin that as good news. The real reduction in County General Purpose Revenue (GPR) dollars was, according to the final 2012 Adopted Budget Summary by Division, a GPR reduction of \$3,209,490 to human services.

Some of the cuts that remained: Eliminated funding for AIDS Resource Center of WI (\$16,826); reduction in Waisman Center Developmental Disabilities Outreach programs (\$26,136); Reduce the DD Family Resource Network (5,753); eliminate the Alternatives to Aggression services to Treatment Alternatives Program clients (\$13,063); Journey Mental Health Crisis Stabilization funding cut \$11,621; Journey Mental Health Family Preservation program cut \$50,000; close Sun Prairie Children Youth and Families office to save \$61,260; and many more. If you would like a copy of the 2012 Adopted Budget Summary by Division, which includes all of the county funding reductions, contact linda@emum.org for an electronic copy of the document.

The official press release touted that the County Human Services budget for 2012 is \$237 million. True enough - what it doesn't say is that only one-third of that is County funding. It states that the budget reflects an

increase of 4.4 million over last year. True, but again, most of that is not county money -- it is the additional burden put on private agencies to leverage more dollars to pass through the county for state and federally reimbursed services. The county reduced its commitment to human services by over \$3 million dollars.



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Human Services budget is one of the largest parts of the County budget, the reality is that two-thirds of the money in that budget is not county money; it is leveraged dollars: leveraged by the agencies that provide the services and it comes to the county because of their efforts. However, cuts to the county

portion of those services make it more and more difficult for agencies to provide the same level of service, resulting in fewer leveraged dollars also coming in.

Human Services at the County level have been held stagnant or reduced for most of the past decade. This despite increasing cost of doing business for human services agencies, the private non-profit sector, and despite growing need.

The percentage of the human services budget provided by the county is actually getting smaller. So while the county touts its increased commitment to human services, the actual percentage of the budget coming from county dollars is less than it was a decade ago.

MUM is in the process of reviewing and analyzing budget numbers from the last twelve county human services budgets. Our next newsletter will discuss the numbers, reasons why GPR dollars budgeted for human services have been under spent every year since 2000 and what that means in terms of our value and commitment to the human services safety net.

Concerned religious leaders of Wisconsin hold Virtual Lobby Day

MUM is part of Concerned Religious Leaders of Wisconsin, a statewide group committed to promoting public policy that supports the common good. On January 10th we held a statewide Virtual Lobby Day. It was a day for clergy, religious leaders, and people of faith around the state to connect with their Senators and Assembly members, to bring them the message that people of faith care about the deleterious effects of reduced state funding on health care; access for the poor and low-income elderly to social services; voting rights; educational programs and services for K-universi-

ty; and workers' rights, including the rights of convicted felons to employment opportunities. People of faith are also deeply troubled by the heightened levels of vitriolic speech and political discord that has been evident among legislators over the past year. We believe that our elected officials need to know that the faith community is concerned about the direction in which our state is going, and that we will raise the moral voice on behalf of the poor, the sick, the elderly, minorities, public school students, and other underserved populations in our state.

BadgerCare threatened

MUM is a member of the Save BadgerCare Coalition, a statewide group of clergy, individuals, non-profits and businesses advocating for the continuation of the states' health insurance program for individuals who are working but cannot afford either their employers insurance coverage, or coverage is not offered by their employer. The program was created by former Governor Tommy Thompson and was a national model for how to expand coverage to the working poor. Governor Doyle expanded the program. Now it is threatened, as then is the access to medical care of tens of thousands of Wisconsin Families. The WI Council on Children and Families does a wonderful job of covering the proposed changes and their implications and you can access that information at their website www.wccf.org.



MUM depends on volunteers

Help with administrative work, support of returning prisoners and their families, events or other tasks. Varied skills needed.

If you're interested in volunteering, visit us on the web at www.emum.org.

Tenant Rights have changed

With the passage of SB 107 decades of fair housing ordinances in Dane County have been overturned. Among the changes: landlords can now ask tenants to pay any amount as a security deposit (previously they were restricted to one month's rent or less); landlords are no longer required to give tenants check-in and check-out forms and take photos to document the condition of the apartment at move in and move out to justify any

deductions to security deposits; landlords now can use court records, including arrest and conviction records, in considering whether to rent to someone. Previously they only could look at the records when they were clearly related to housing issues, and only for the past two years.

For a complete description of this bill and what it means to tenant's rights contact the Tenant Resource Center at 608-257-0006.

Funny?

"If this is going to be a Christian nation that doesn't help the poor, either we have to pretend that Jesus was just as selfish as we are, or we've got to acknowledge that he commanded us to love the poor and serve the needy without condition and then admit that we just don't want to do it." ~Stephen Colbert

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)

Payment type [Make your secure gift online at www.emum.org.]

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

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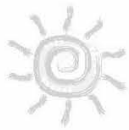
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Please send your contribution to: Madison-area Urban Ministry, 2300 S. Park St., #2022, Madison, WI 53713



Beat the Winter Blues: Celebrate MUM's Work



It's a Party! It's our *Only Annual* FUNdraiser!



March 1, 2012
5:00 to 8:00 PM



New Location: Madison Christian Community, 7118 Old Sauk Rd., Madison

Music! Poetry! Silent Auction! Appetizers!

This is a great opportunity to hear success stories from Madison-area Urban Ministry. Accept this invitation to contribute to the work of social justice.

Tickets are \$35 per person

**Contributions can be made online at
www.emum.org!**



To help us meet our fundraising goal we need your help. Please consider becoming a sponsor of the event.

_____ **Individual Sponsor \$50** 1 event ticket and your name listed in our literature.

_____ **Corporate Sponsor \$150** 2 event tickets, company name and logo listed.

_____ **Major Sponsor \$500** 4 event tickets, company name and logo listed.

_____ **Partner in Justice \$1,000** 8 event tickets company name and logo listed.

Please print your name as you would like it listed: _____

Logos can be emailed to lori@emum.org.

All sponsors will be listed in the program booklet, receive recognition in our newsletter, on our website and in our Annual Report.

Please return this form by February 17th for the most recognition. Send to MUM, 2300 S. Park Street, Ste. 2022, Madison, WI 53713. Thank you for your support!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, February 23
6:00 p.m.

Thursday, March 1
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 24
9:00 a.m. to noon

Thursday, March 15
8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, March 27
3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Fighting Poverty Coalition. Focus on eliminating hunger. At St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 605 Spruce Street, Madison. To learn more find Fighting Poverty Coalition-Dane County on Facebook.

Beat those Winter Blues. MUM's 2012 Fundraiser. At Community of Hope, 7118 Old Sauk Road, Madison. For more information visit our website at www.emum.org or see page 7.

Returning Prisoner Simulation. Fitchburg Memorial United Church of Christ, 5705 Lacy Road, Fitchburg, Wisconsin. To register, contact Jackie Austin at jackie@emum.org.

Greater Isthmus Group, G.I.G. MUM's work group on housing. Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1021 Spaight Street.

Re-Entry Service Fair. Villager, 2300 S. Park Street, Community Room in Atrium Building.

Plan to join us
Thursday, March 1st:
**Beat the Winter
Blues FUNDRAISER**
See details on page 7.

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