



Washington Report To Presbyterians

Winter 2017

From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Public Witness

Raising a Prophetic Voice through the Social Justice Policy of Presbyterians since 1946

Join us for Advocacy Training Weekend!

*Confronting Chaos, Forging
Community – Racism,
Militarism, and Materialism*

Compassion Peace and Justice Training Day

April 21

Ecumenical Advocacy Days April 21-24



Featured Speakers Include:

Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, Director of the Office of Public Witness;

Rev. Kevin Johnson, Calvary Presbyterian Church in Detroit;

Rev. Floretta Watkins, Deputy Wing Chaplain to the 145th Air National Guard;

Amal Nassar, founder of the Tent of Nations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories;

Elona Street Sewart, Delaware Nanticoke tribe and ruling Elder and member of Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, MN;

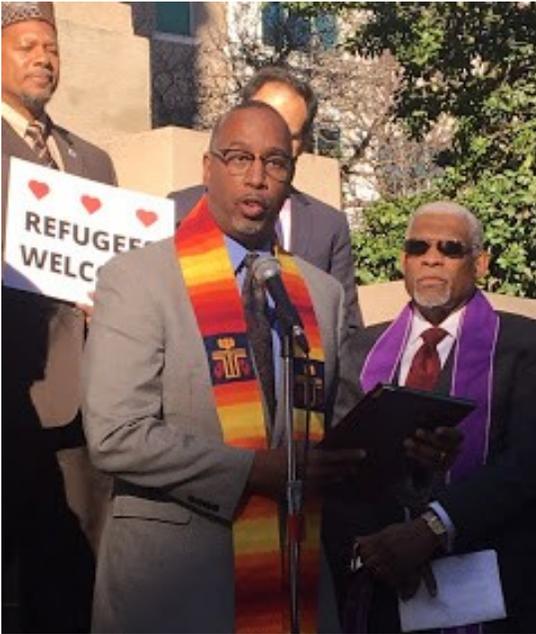
Stephenie Quintona-Martinez, former community organizer and social/legal service provider on the US Mexico boarder and student at Union Theological Seminary in New York;

For more information on workshops and speakers go to our website at <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/washington/advocacy-training-weekend/>

Over the past year, our nation has experienced a divisive election in which racism, xenophobia, and religious bigotry were a constant. We still find racism an open wound in our nation, resulting in the disproportionate killing of black and brown bodies and stunting their lives through unjust economic and social structures. The militarization of our police is a reflection not only of broken communal values, but also a lopsided foreign policy that spends drastically more on defense than diplomacy or development. Militarism continues to be the United States' overriding approach to resolving conflict, despite studies that show the effectiveness of peacebuilding and the power of non-violence. Extreme materialism threatens our souls and our very planet, as prosperity narratives and unchecked capitalism spread despite overwhelming scientific evidence that our current path is unsustainable. As in Dr. King's time, we teeter precariously between chaos and community.

Join us April 21 for Compassion Peace and Justice Training Day at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington D.C. Gather with your fellow Presbyterians as we look at how our church and our partners are confronting racism, materialism, and militarism in our country and abroad.

A Greeting from New OPW Director, Rev. Jimmie Hawkins



Greetings from the Office of Public Witness. EAD is a wonderful opportunity for justice seeking people to gather during this time of confusion, frustration and bewilderment as to how we ever got to this place in time. Like many of you, I have traveled here from a journey along many roads. Most recently, I served as the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian for twenty years. I come as a husband of nineteen years married to a wonderful woman of faith; as the father of a daughter of thirteen years and a son of twelve years. I come as a son of North Carolina who has spent the last four years wandering in the wilderness of HB2, voter ID legislation and a major coal ash spill which despoiled God's creation. And yet, like you, I come to be refreshed and renewed by being in the company of woman and men who welcome the challenges of life as a call from God to shout into the raging storm, "Thus says the Lord God, let my people go!" I look forward to earnest and heartfelt conversation, opportunities to share with and learn from you. For we were called to be here for such a time as this.

In Faith We Share,

Rev. Jimmie Ray Hawkins



Heads of Washington Faith Offices Meet with Congressional Black Caucus Members On Matters of Justice

Washington D.C.– On March 9th leaders in the faith community gathered with members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and their staffers to discuss matters of common concern. The meeting was called by Office of Public Witness Director Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, who when asked about the urgency of such an event said, “the premature and unwise actions of the Trump administration in the first months of his administration have become a rallying cry of protest for many of us. We hope to discuss opportunities to partner together in resisting many of the political actions which will bring harm to the poor and disadvantaged.” The meeting took place at 10 AM in the office of CBC Chair, Representative G. K. Butterfield (North Carolina 1st District). Also in attendance were Heads of Office from a broad range of religious traditions including the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, the Religious Action Center for Reformed Judaism, and the National Council of Churches.

Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (Texas 18th District) also made remarks at this meeting and spoke on the current political climate from her vantage point. She recounted how the social safety net is being attacked from all fronts, from efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act to the recently announced cuts to the Housing and Urban Development budget. She discussed how these actions would devastate the lives of people across this nation, many of them congregants of the faith groups represented in the room. She encouraged faith leaders to heed the command, “get up and walk,” stating that this is the time for faith groups to hold their own town halls and advocacy meetings. She said that more than ever before, it is necessary for faith groups to be a prophetic voice for justice in a time when the most vulnerable in our society are being actively marginalized.

Faith leaders expressed interest in a continued dialogue with CBC members and staff, and will continue to explore opportunities to co-create a justice agenda in 2017 and beyond.



A Faithful Response to ACA

The Office of Public Witness joins 40 Faith Organizations in signing a letter urging that any change, repeal or repair of the Affordable Care Act must be comprehensive and meet our 10 priorities for a faithful healthcare system.

These principles include preserving the coverage gains made by the ACA, upholding the purpose of Medicaid by refraining from structural funding changes, maintaining the essential health benefits currently provided by the ACA, and preventing insurance companies from discrimination against women, the elderly, and people in poverty. The letter can be viewed in full online.

The draft House bill revealed recently **substantially reduces the ACA subsidies that helped millions afford health insurance and end the Medicaid expansion that extended health coverage to millions more.** It also ends Medicaid as people in America now know it, saddling states with new health care costs by creating per-capita caps[2].

The proposal also defunds Planned Parenthood. It must be noted that it is illegal for government money to be used for abortions. Therefore, arguments on Capitol Hill, state legislatures and local municipalities are morally based rather than directly related to the utilization of government funds for abortions. At the center of the debate is discontinuing government contracts for Planned Parenthood as a service provider for poor people.

Furthermore, all of ACA's taxes are repealed, which amounts to an enormous tax cut for the wealthy — at least \$346 billion over 10 years, every cent going to taxpayers earning more than \$200,000 (\$250,000 for couples). The tax repeal, the Brookings Institution has reported, will make it very difficult pay for any ACA “replacement”

— which still isn't on the horizon. It also will exacerbate the fiscal problems of Medicare, by hastening the exhaustion of the program's trust fund by four years, to 2025.[3]

*Isaiah speaks God's word to say “No more shall there be ... an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime”
(Isa. 65:20a).*

*We, as Reformed Christians,
bear witness to Jesus Christ in word,
but also in deed.*

*As followers of our Great Physician
Jesus, we have a moral imperative to
work to assure that everyone has full
access to health care[1].*

The call for people of faith to care and provide for the sick and provide for the sick. Jesus told the parable of the talents and resources. Muslims are called to visit the sick as well.

We are faced with a repeal based upon reasons of expediency. A replacement for a law that has increased by over 100 million who are having to make difficult choices will be a sign of our witness to the love of God for all people.

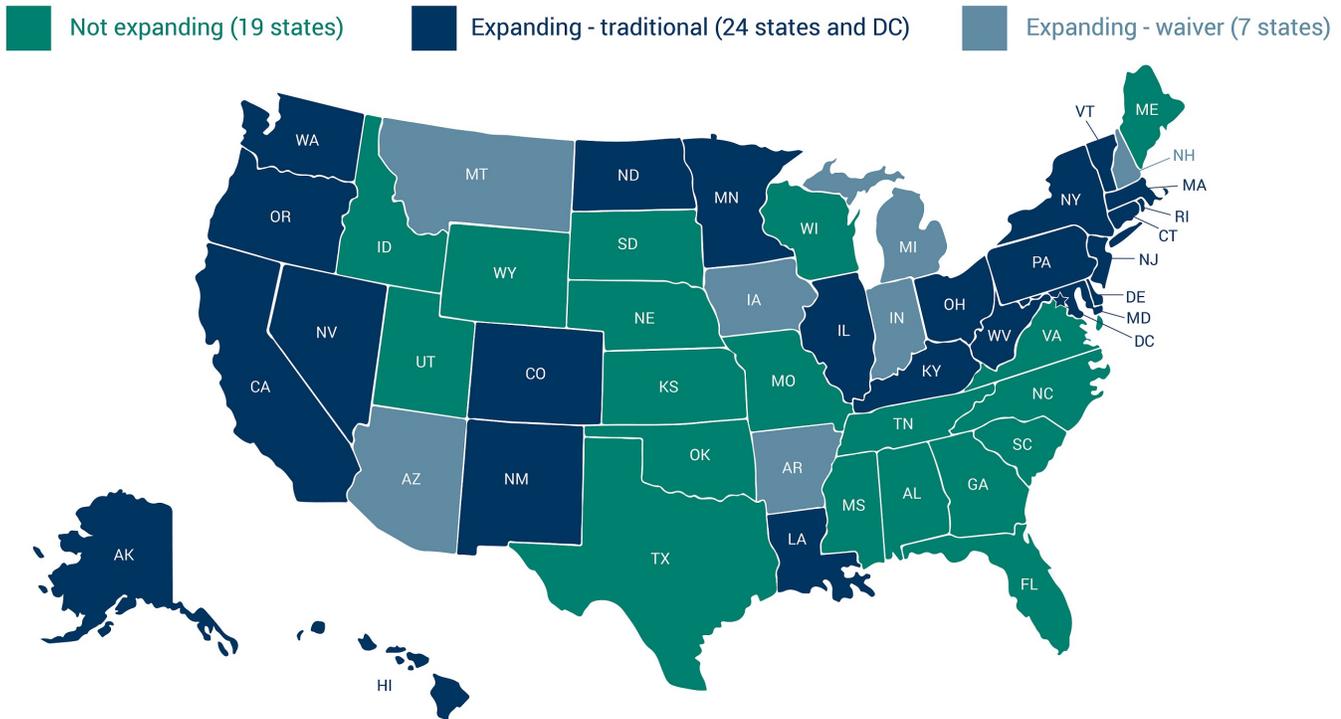
[1] On Supporting Single Payer Universal Health Care, Approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008)

[2] <http://familiesusa.org/press-release/2017/house-bill-1000>

[3] <http://www.latimes.com/business/hiltzik/la-fi-11-17-aca-2017>

A Repeal and Replacement

State Medicaid Expansion Decisions, October 2016



Sources: Medicaid State Plan Amendments and Section 1115 Medicaid demonstration waiver documents. See <http://medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/medicaid-state-plan-amendments/medicaid-state-plan-amendments.html> and <http://www.medicare.gov/Medicare-CHIP-Program-Information/By-Topics/Waivers/Waivers.html>

for those whose lives are scarred by poverty and illness is a mandatory call. Christians are called to feed the hungry of the Good Samaritan wherein a stranger, an enemy of the injured man, provided for his care out of his personal part of their healing. The Jewish faith has a scriptural mandate to provide hospitality and care for the sick.

which are not moral, ethical nor right; rather strictly political. The American Health Care Act is an unnecessary 20 million those who have health care coverage. What we have before us is a refusal to do what is best for million when deciding whether to feed their family or purchase health care. We stand and speak in support of the ACA as a people, especially those struggling under the crushing weight of poverty.

Healthcare Reform

ACA replacement plan revealed would slash coverage and ration care millions
-hiltzik-obamacare-repeal-20170306-story.html

... “Advocacy Days” Continued from Page 1

In plenaries and workshops we will analyze our current context and offer concrete tools for members and their congregations to address these urgent issues. We will learn how we can “forge community” amidst the current chaos in our country.

After Compassion Peace and Justice Training Day join the ecumenical community for Ecumenical Advocacy Days April 21-24. Almost one thousand Christian advocates join us every year for a weekend of workshops, lectures, and concrete actions addressing the ills of our nation. Rev J. Herbert Nelson, Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) General Assembly will serve as the keynote preacher for the Interdenominational Worship service on Sunday, April 23, 2017. And Tamika Mallory, National Co-Chair of the Women’s March on Washington and Former Executive Director of the National Action Network, will give the Friday Evening keynote address. The weekend culminates in a lobby day on Monday, April 24th when we raise our voices in the halls of power for a more just society. More information on Ecumenical Advocacy Days can be found at www.advocacydays.org.

Come join us for a weekend of education and advocacy where you can speak truth to power and learn tools to organize and mobilize when you return home. Now more than ever your voice is needed in Washington and in your local community!



OPW Staff and Young Adults brave the cold at a rally to Support EPA workers and mission

Welcome to the Young Adults at the OPW!



Bridget Wendell

Bridget Wendell is the Spring 2017 Seminary Intern with the Office of Public Witness. Bridget is attending Princeton Theological Seminary, and is pursuing a Masters of Divinity degree. This semester she is participating in Wesley Seminary's National Capital Semester for Seminarians program. Through this program she has the opportunity to meet with advocates and politicians in DC and delve into advocacy work with the OPW. Prior to enrolling in seminary, Bridget worked as a public high school Spanish teacher for five years in both North Carolina and Pennsylvania. During her summers as a teacher, she participated in mission trips and led international travel trips for teenagers. She felt her call to ministry while participating in a summer long mission program in Pucallpa, Peru. A desire to do long-term mission work led her to attend Princeton Theological Seminary. Through participation in various programs, her seminary experience, and her work with the OPW, she is continuing to discern her specific call. Integral in this process has been her work with local churches. Throughout last year, she worked as a Youth Minister in a PC

(USA) church in Glenside, PA, and spent the past summer working with a Methodist church in Wilmington, NC. This semester at the OPW, Bridget is pursuing her passion for immigration justice by working with the Sanctuary Movement. She plans to get involved with local organizations and learn about churches going through the discernment process, as well as help support other OPW efforts. Bridget is excited to be joining the Presbyterian Advocacy effort and the excellent team at the Office of Public Witness.

Ray Chen

Ray Chen is currently a Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow placed at the Office of Public Witness, PC(USA). He previously worked with Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN) for the fellowship field placement for half a year prior to joining the office. With LA CAN, he organized around issues related to food justice, civil rights, and housing justice, focusing his time on coordinating a community-based food assessment of the Skid Row neighborhood. He graduated from Stanford University in spring of 2016 with a degree in Human Biology that focused on community health, a minor in African & African American Studies, and honors in education. While a student, he was deeply involved with Asian American communities, through which he first developed a social justice orientation and a commitment to envisioning, creating, and maintaining just and sustainable communities. As an immigrant and Christian, he is excited to be working with the OPW on mobilizing and empowering congregations and their surrounding communities to protect immigrants of all statuses. He is also interested to learn more about how faith-based advocacy groups prophetically speak forth and engender a vision of justice, healing and reconciliation.





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