

*Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer."
(Amos 7:8)*

MFSA NCC—The Plumb Line

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Introduction

This is the first issue of the newsletter for the North Carolina Annual Conference chapter of The Methodist Federation for Social Action. The national MFSA organization was founded in 1907. They were founded by a group of Methodists who met not too far from the White House and later actually met with then President Teddy Roosevelt about some of the concerns of the day they had. They would be influential in writing the Social Creed of the Methodist Church (we were not united until 1968) and also the Social Principles. They have always maintained their independence from the institutional church so that they could be a clear voice of conscience within the church.

The North Carolina chapter of MFSA dates back to at least the mid 1980's. Since then, we have advocated for open itineracy, rights of farm workers and migrant laborers, fair wages and taxes, full inclusion of LGBTQI persons in the United Methodist Church, full inclusion of people of color in the UMC, and voting rights for all. We



Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry

In early 2009, MFSA NCC started the Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry, in memory of Jack Crum, a United Methodist pastor in the North Carolina Conference who dared to speak the truth about segregation and other injustices and paid the price for conscience sake. Our first conference was about people who had the paid price for being prophetic; it included Jimmy Creech, a pastor in our conference who was defrocked for having performed a same sex marriage. Other conferences have focused on school diversity, child poverty, voting rights, full inclusion of LGBTQ persons in the United Methodist Church, and the NC constitutional amendment banning same sex marriage.

Introduction, continued

have worked for a more just and inclusive society and church through resolutions, the Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry, and by partnering with organizations such as North Carolina chapter of the NAACP, North Carolina Council of Churches, Reconciling United Methodists and Friends NC, and Movement to End Racism and Islamophobia (MERI).

Annual Conference

MFSA NCC Activities at the 2016 Annual Conference included:

- Third annual Gayle Felton Love Thy Neighbor Lunch in association with Reconciling United Methodists and Friends NC
- We awarded Rev. Edwin Rowe with the Jimmy Creech Prophetic Ministry award.
- We presented John Suddath, a longtime leader in Reconciling United Methodists and Friends, with the Gayle Felton Drum Major for Justice Award.
- We organized a vigil for the victims of the Orlando Massacre.

Jack Crum Conference, continued

Our most recent conference was “Dare to Hear—An Honest Conversation about Race and the End of White Privilege”. Our keynote was Dr. Jennifer Harvey, author of “Dear White Christians: For those still longing for racial reconciliation” and workshop leaders including Reverend Alan Felton, Manzoor Cheema, co founder of Muslims for Social Justice and Movement to End Racism and Islamophobia, and the closing preacher was then Capital District DS Reverend Leonard Fairley (now Bishop Fairley).

Also we sponsored a showing an “Act of Love” with Reconciling United Methodists and Friends NC at Fairmont United Methodist Church in Raleigh. The film is about Reverend Frank Schaefer and how he was defrocked and re-frocked after having performed his son’s same sex wedding and the larger issue of full inclusion of LGBTQ persons in the life and ministry of The United Methodist Church.

With the hateful rhetoric that been centered around refugees and immigrants during the 2016 election campaign the board of MFSA NC decided the next Jack Crum Conference should be centered around “Otherness”. Therefore the next Jack Crum Conference on Prophetic Ministry is called “Radical Welcome: Living with the Other.” The date is Saturday March 25th, 9:30 am till 4:00 pm at Jarvis Memorial United Methodist Church. Speakers include retired bishop Reverend William Willimon, Reverend Carl Kenney, and Marcia Owen, coauthor of “Living Without Enemies.” Registration is open now and early bird rate is \$25 for adults and \$12.50 for students. For \$40 you can get admission to both the Jack Crum Conference and the North Carolina Council of Churches Legislative Seminar on Monday March 27th 8:30 am-4:00 pm at St Mark’s United Methodist Church in Raleigh.