

December 15, 2009

# Keeping Up with the JONAHs

**jonah**

...Justice through Faith and Action

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## A Word from JONAH's President

The year 2009 was a dynamic year for JONAH. It was also a transitional year for us.

When shootings in our neighborhoods caused fear and anger and confusion, JONAH was there. When people needed a place to talk and share their hurts and outrage, JONAH was there. When it was time to march through troubled neighborhoods and contact public officials, JONAH was there.

When the debate about health care was growing divisive and lost in half-truths, JONAH had people studying this issue and JONAH was willing to speak out. Yes, we were heard even in Washington. JONAH was there.

When political leaders in Lansing were proposing budget cuts, JONAH joined with other organization to remind our leaders not to balance the budget on the back of our youth or our pre-school children. JONAH was in Lansing several times. JONAH was heard. JONAH was there.

When issues around transportation or jobs or the rights of immigrants were being discussed, JONAH was involved and informed, organized and speaking out. Once again, JONAH was there.

BUT the Whale-Power of JONAH has been running low on fuel. Our main foundation grant ran out. The fresh supply of funds has been slow to arrive. The FLOW of DOUGH is SLOW to GROW!!!

Money talk must discourage some folks. We have empty seats at our Executive Board table. We have empty tables at our monthly Leadership Assembly. This "Joint-religious Organizing Network for Action and Hope" looks a bit frail at times.

Friends, it is time to get very serious, very intentional about the task of growing JONAH. About Organizing People, I think we've been slow, appearing hesitant, shy, perhaps lacking energy and purpose. It's time to invite and inspire.

About Organizing Money, wow, we've been very slow, as if waiting for someone else to act, not focused, lacking enthusiasm. It seems to me that we haven't made the personal one-to-one connections we should have been making, so that we would have the donor base we could be relying on now, the "Friends of JONAH" we need to be asking.

So for a while at least, our full-time staff will be part-time or laid off. We'll depend more on volunteer help. Some generous donations have helped. Some requests for grants are pending. But let's face the fact: a crisis is a crisis.

Through 2009 JONAH has been there. JONAH blessed our community. The question now is: In 2010 will JONAH be there?

And the question for each one of us is: FOR JONAH TO BE THERE IN 2010, WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

~ Father Chuck Fischer



## Transportation Task Force Update

~Chair, Ebony Thorpe

On November 11, we started a transportation listening campaign, the purpose of which is to build interest in the topic and get others involved. This is what has taken place so far:

I have about 60-70 surveys filled out. They still need to be tallied. I was able to get some footage at the bus depot and had about seven people who were willing to share their stories on video. The video is in the editing process. I did get one or two people who would let us reference their stories.

I have made one attempt to get in contact with Mark Schauer's office. I haven't gotten a response and really need to have him contacted again. I will be sending an email to a state level contact to see if he will come to speak about transit on the state level. If any of you know of someone else who could speak to the topic, please feel free to let me know.

On December 17 from 6:00 - 8:00 pm at Maple United Methodist Church, 342 Capital Avenue, NE we will be having a transit town hall style discussion. When trying to formulate in my mind what this forum would look like. I think having someone speak about how transit affects the lives of so many in our community, and our nation for that matter, is important. Also, sharing both of the DVD's and having time for public comment and questions on the subject will just about cover the time span of 2 hours.

I would like to invite our transit manager and city officials.

What still needs to be done:

Flyer's and email sent out for town hall.

More surveys filled out. We have about 100.

More voices to share "How transit affects their lives" at the town hall on 17th

Please feel free to give me a call at 269-924-5094 with comments and commitments.

Thanks. ~ Ebony



## Upcoming Events:

### Transportation Town Hall:

Thurs. Dec. 17, 6:00pm @  
Maple United Methodist  
342 Capital Avenue, NE

### JONAH Executive Board:

Tues. Jan. 12, 3:30pm @  
First United Methodist

### Martin Luther King, Jr. Prayer Breakfast

Sat. Jan. 16, 9am @  
First Congregational Church  
145 Capital Avenue, NE.  
Battle Creek, MI

### JONAH Leadership Assembly:

Tues. Jan. 19, 5:00pm @  
First United Methodist

### CAAV Meeting:

Mon. Jan. 25, 6pm @  
First United Methodist Church



You Are Invited!

2010 JONAH Prayer Breakfast in honor of  
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“ Reclaiming the Dream through:  
Faith, Community Collaboration,  
Education, and Social Justice”

Featuring Guest Speaker:  
The Reverend Dr. James C. Perkins,  
Pastor of Greater Christ Baptist Church  
Detroit, MI

**Saturday, January 16, 2010**  
**9:00 - 11:00 a.m.**

First Congregational Church -  
United Church of Christ,  
145 Capital Avenue, NE, Battle Creek, MI

**Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased from:**  
St. Philip Catholic Church  
Second Missionary Baptist Church  
First United Methodist Church  
JONAH Members

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**JONAH Ntosake Women will be sponsoring gatherings again in  
2010. Stay tuned for more information.**

Courage is like a muscle.  
We strengthen it with use.

~ Ruth Gordon



# *What has your church been up to?...*

*Mt Zion AME - volunteers at Dudley Elementary School*

*Maple UMC - quarterly Share Dinners to serve the homeless and those in need*

*First UMC -Host Sat @ Six Concerts  
Saturday 12/19, 6:00-8:00 pm  
Roland Sunkins and Friends  
\$10.00 donation appreciated  
First United Methodist Church  
111 East Michigan Avenue  
Battle Creek, MI*



*Send us the latest good works in which you are involved*

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## **Voices of Peace Update!**

The mission is, "We choose nonviolent means to achieve a community, a society, and a world of peace, justice and dignity for all beings."

In October, Voices of Peace helped sponsor Sam Gray as advisor of PeaceJam and Roshanda Short, a student, to the PeaceJam Slam training at W.M.U. Sam reported at the November V.O.P. meeting that it was a day of high energy that translated positive change to the students. They have returned energized and have four more students committed to work with them. They will encourage others to become involved.

Amnesty International has asked people to write to Aung San Suu Kyi, one of the Nobel Prize Winners committed as a PeaceJam mentor. She has not been able to participate in the PeaceJam program because for the last 14 years she has been under detention.

Several years ago she was voted leader of Burma by a landslide victory offering a voice of hope and peace to Burma, but the military junta refused to transfer the power to her. Recently, this military power has sentenced her to 18 months of house arrest. Through scores of letters to her government, Amnesty International hopes to secure her release. We distributed addresses and information at the Voices of Peace meeting and are writing letters.

If you are interested in joining us in this letter writing campaign to help free Aung San Suu Kyi, log on to the Amnesty International website.

Voices of Peace meets the fourth Monday of each month excluding December. Contact Veroneze Strader, email: [verstrader@yahoo.com](mailto:verstrader@yahoo.com)

## Do you want to be a "piece of the peace" in Battle Creek?

If you've attended a Community Collaborative Against Violence (CCAV) meeting sometime since the group started meeting in July, you have probably heard the phrases, "Get in Where you Fit In" and a "Piece of the Peace." The CCAV group has done a lot of talking about stopping the violence in our community since July. Maybe some of you have stopped coming to the CCAV meetings because you're tired of the talking and are ready to take some action. Well, here's your chance to get involved. The following programs are getting ready to move forward. Subcommittees are forming and people of all ages are invited to participate and contribute in whatever way they feel called.

**Youth Summit** – A two-day city wide youth summit during Spring break 2010 with a range of activities, workshops, and lectures. Topics will include but not be limited to: health education, entrepreneurship, criminal justice system, personal finances, and education. Some ways you can get involved are through assisting with the planning stages, locating speakers, volunteers, and financial donations. To get involved contact: Sam Gray at 269-209-0293 or tomcat899@comcast.net .

**Peace Jam Ambassadors** – The Peace Jam Ambassador program is for teen and young adults 14-19 years of age. Several youth and an adult advisor have gone to training and are excited about attracting youth to this program. This year's Peace Jam laureate is Betty Williams. You can get involved by helping to gain more youth involvement and assisting with the facilitating of the meeting. Snacks are also appreciated. Contact: Sam Gray at 269-209-0293 or tomcat899@comcast.net .

**Peace Jam Juniors** – Possibility of starting a pilot Peace Jam Juniors club in the Ann J. Kellogg Elementary Schools. This is in the early stages of development, and your input and involvement is needed to get this piece moving. If you would like more information or want to get involved contact: Mickey Harris at 269-660-1950 or mickey.harrisbc@yahoo.com

**Youth Listening Campaign** – The CCAV has had many conversations about hearing the voice of the youth throughout the community. Here is an opportunity to put together a survey, which can be taken to the youth for feedback. There are a lot of ways this can be done. Your information, ideas, and assistance are needed. Contact: Ebony Thorpe at 269-924-5094 or ebonyjonah09@yahoo.com

**Other opportunities** – There are many pieces to the puzzle to help solve the issue of violence. We welcome conversations on other opportunities where the collaborative can get involved throughout the community.

**Our next meeting of the CCAV will be on Monday, January 25, from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.  
at First United Methodist Church, 111 E. Michigan Avenue.**

**Contact the JONAH office for more information at 269-660-1950. Please come as your input is needed.**



Hello, comrades in the fight for social justice through faith and action! We are coming to the end of 2009, bringing our hopes and fears as we move into 2010. As we reflect on JONAH's accomplishments in 2009, we give thanks and we celebrate. As we reflect on our weaknesses, we pray for strength and wisdom to learn from what challenged us. We are called to be the change we yearn for, so let us not grow weary in our quest as we live out our faith in action!

**WE HAVE A SPIRIT OF HOPE**

Greater  
Create 5 Year Vision  
Strategic Victory  
Focus on One Goal  
Greater Inclusivity  
Financial Stability Sustainability  
Community Relevance  
Greater Impact  
Voice for Change  
Set New Goals  
Influence Others  
Re-Energize  
Growth  
Revisit Purpose  
More Active  
Better Economy  
Deeper Relationships

**WE ARE FACING OUR FEARS**

No New Leaders  
Choose Not to Act  
Flicker Out  
Lose Focus  
Bad Economy  
Just a "lovely" group  
Lack of Interest  
No Funding  
Ineffective  
Too Many Directions  
Lose Hope  
How to Connect

**WE MADE COMMITMENTS**

Complete More 1-1s  
Spiritual Leaders Table  
Become Monthly Donor  
Go to Training  
Raise New Leaders  
Ask for Donation  
Invite to Participate  
Build Strong Fund  
Development Team  
Organize Core Teams  
Active Task Forces

Let's commit together for a strong year in 2010!

*Stacy M. Caballero*

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Lead Organizer

