**SUMMARY OF RECENT JONAH ACTIVITY** *As of 6.27.22*

The JONAH Board and Committees has held several fundraisers, is working to improve sustaining membership experience, is finishing a huge update to our website, spoken at congregations and tabled at events, held a board retreat, built partnerships across the state with groups working on our issues, recruited new volunteers and congregation members, is offering training opportunities, communicates with community religious leaders, and works diligently to lift up the voice of the oppressed.

The Mental Health Group co-organized mental health wellness workshops, created a community resource document, identified peer support as a gap need and crisis prevention tool, and are lifting up the voice of that need as well as partnering and supporting efforts of groups working to create more peer support and mental health access. We are preparing our own public stories and have been meeting with various groups to increase real conversation around mental health. We are working to obtain grant funds to bring more various trainings, offered by partners, into the community: peer mentor, Emotional CPR, ACES and resiliency, QPR, and more. We are planning to hold community events to build connection. We meet the first and third Thursdays at 10am. Contact Lynn at cvjonahorganizer@gmail.com or 715-497-8732 for more information.

The Environmental Task Force meets the first Monday of the month at 7PM, at various locations. Our work is centered around the following three areas at this time:

1. Composting and why it is important

2. Single use plastics reduction and alternatives

3. Alternative lawns to encourage biodiversity and reduce pesticide use

We focus on community education and outreach by working with congregations to develop Green Teams and collaborating with other community groups. We also support the City of Eau Claire Sustainability Advisory Committee and the programs implemented by EC County Department of Recycling and Sustainability. We support the residents that live near the landfill. We recently prevented a large water bottle company from moving into Eau Claire. With July 4th holiday, our next meeting is Monday July 11 at 7PM. Contact Sue Waits, 715-829-5762, waitsr@charter.net for more information.

The Immigration Task Force partnered with the city of Altoona on the River Prairie Cultural Festival, worked with the Health Department on various health initiatives (particularly related to COVID 19’s impact on our local immigrant population), collaborated with the Eau Claire Area School District on resources for affected minority students, continue to co-host a Mobile Consulate visit, maintain a dialogue with the EC Police Department on local immigrant concerns, partnered with UWEC to produce $3700 of scholarships benefitting the Latinx Student Association, participated in statewide WISDOM Immigration calls, established a partnership with Chippewa Valley Bridge Builders asylum seeker sponsorship, participated in a local group to welcome Afghan Refugees to the Chippewa Valley, and communicated with local and state legislators  on issues related to immigration - especially Driver’s Cards for Undocumented Wisconsinites. Immigration Task Force meetings are 3rd Mondays at 4:30-5:45 P.M. Contact rk9561@charter.net.

* August 21- Eau Claire 150th Birthday event to celebrate our increasingly diverse Eau Claire community. We are looking for individuals to share/lead a birthday party game or special tradition that is familiar to them or a part of their culture of origin. Location: Carson Park.
* September 17- Mexican Mobile Consulate at Immanuel Lutheran Church on Golf Road.

The Child Poverty Task Force, which meets 4th Mondays at 4:30pm via Zoom, continues to work to inform the public of the dramatic social and financial costs of child poverty. Decades of research and international, and national programs demonstrate how child poverty and its high public cost can be significantly reduced through direct payments to families. The task force is working to collect stories of families living in poverty and using these stories and the research to inform the public and regional policy makers. COVID resulted in a large reduction is child care facilities in Wisconsin and the Chippewa Valley. The task Force is also working with public officials to support low-cost quality child care as a means to improve the development of children’s mental and emotional development. There are currently four active direct payment proposals before the US congress. The proposals include many bipartisan elements. JONAH asks that citizens encourage their congressional representatives to support moving a bipartisan bill forward.

Members of the Affordable Housing Task Force advocated for, supported, and collaborated with organizations and housing developers including Oak Ridge Mobile Home Court residents, Mt. Washington, Prairie Heights, Water St Flats, Millwood Crossing, No Boundaries, Hope Village, Fountain Uppers, and Sawmill Flats. They trained and certified one member of the core team to provide mediation services and to be able to train volunteers to mediate in landlord tenant disputes. They organized a large group of community stakeholders to form a Steering Committee for the development of a Day Resource Center for individuals experiencing homelessness. The AHTF worked with City of EC officials to advocate for better housing opportunities for residents of the Regency Hotel, and to develop a pilot project called the Landlord Support Program. After receiving grant awards in excess of $60,000 for startup, the AHTF worked with Grace Lutheran Church to obtain office space for the EC Tenant Landlord Resource Center, including an admin office, mediation space and meeting rooms. Also designed a logo for the EC-TLRC and began work on a website.

The Transportation Committee works with Chippewa Valley Transit Alliance, which has primarily focused on improving Eau Claire Transit, by working with the city’s Transit Commission and the Eau Claire City Council. In late summer and fall 2022 major bus route changes will be proposed, with open houses and public hearings, regarding improved service primarily in Altoona, and the north and south sides of Eau Claire. The new bus transit center is expected to open in summer 2023, and there are concerns that the number of bathrooms in the facility for drivers and passengers will be inadequate - it is a “wait and see” situation. CVTA sponsored free bus rides on Earth Day, promoted Transit Equity Day in February, and participated in Wisconsin Bike Week in June. This past winter, a pilot program allowing people experiencing homelessness to ride Eau Claire Transit for free was highly utilized, and the City of Eau Claire is exploring how to make it a year-round permanent program. Contact CVTA at: chippewavalleytransitalliance@gmail.com

The Chippewa Valley Justice Action Team works to transform the intersection of poverty, Incarceration and mental health. They lift up the voice of lived experience and support EXPO/FREE. They are looking to partner with UWEC to bring art and stories of lived experience together. They have a committee looking cross-culturally at domestic violence and sexual abuse. They worked hard to get someone with lived experience on the Eau Claire Criminal Justice Collaborative Council. They are strategizing on the next gap needed to address. They meet 2nd Wednesdays at 8:390am.

Since 2014, EXPO (EX-incarcerated People Organizing) works to end mass incarceration, eliminate structural discrimination against formerly incarcerated people, and restore formerly incarcerated people to full participation in the life of our communities. EXPO is currently working on collecting 50,000 signatures by the end of the year for our Unlock The Vote petition which will restore voting rights to those on felony probation the second they are released back into the community. We will be holding a virtual training on how to hold petition drives in the Chippewa Valley and across the state. We are also planning a People & Politics around the upcoming sheriff's race. We will host an event at a local barbershop and bring the community in to speak with elected officials.

FREE is a campaign of women working to impact issues facing incarcerated women. FREE leaders are working with UW Madison on a community advisory board for the Healthy Brain and Child Development Study. This study is looking at how social stressors affect development in infants and young children as well as the impact of early exposure to substances in young children. This week they will be going to tour the Weisman Center in Madison to be able to better support families through the process. FREE has sister restoration circles virtually and soon will be having them in person in the Chippewa Valley. In the next couple weeks FREE is meeting with the Department of Corrections to try to get answers and data around housing in our area.

The JONAH Religious Leaders have been continuing to meet every other 2nd Tuesday at 12:30pm to discuss what the congregations are seeing, how they can support each other, what they can learn from groups in the community working to support marginalized populations, and staying updated on JONAH’s work. They write articles from clergy perspective on justice for the JONAH newsletter. They have held a vigil for the homeless and a vigil for Ukraine this year.

The JONAH Training Team has been collecting stories on how our training material has impacted people’s lives. They are offering a training on our most basic tool: Building Relationships Through 1-To-1 Conversations. This tool is useful for people working as a team, for people looking for volunteers to fill a role, in learning how to bring in new people to your organization, and for connecting with people whose input you need or seem to have a different viewpoint than you. It will be Saturday July 30, 2022 from 10am-12pm in person at First Presbyterian Church.  It is donation-based and childcare is available. Register here: <https://bit.ly/3vLl5TN>