

It's Time to Fix Our Broken System

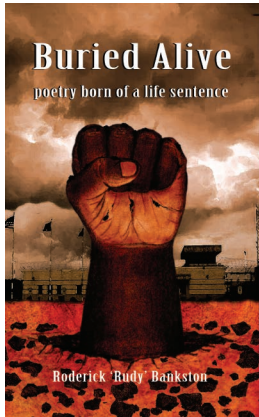


MOSES 2018

Criminal Justice Reform

Affliction*

as these fogged days fade away
under the suffocation of lonely nights
i muster with all my might the fortitude to hold on
to this fragile thread of hope
wavering inside me
praying earnestly for the Most High to guide me
through this dazed existence
where at every instance i awaken to fall
into a Nightmare
the flaring glare of despair stares hatred
without abatement
i soldier my way out of debasement
each slippery stair a mile long
i pray past broken men craving home
as torment attaches itself to every breath
i breathe
i grieve
but see better dayz smiling at me
from a distance
i climb
i crawl
i claw my way towards its fulfillment
faith compelling me
spirit propelling me
forward
onward
i am here to survive
and rise up out of this abyss
scathed but unbroken



*written by Rudy Bankston, his first day in Boscobel Supermax facility

Excerpted from Buried Alive: poetry born of a life sentence by Roderick "Rudy" Bankston

Available at iamWeClassics.com

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About MOSES

MOSES (Madison Organizing in Strength, Equality and Solidarity) is a grass roots, interfaith organization working in the Madison area that unites congregations, individuals, and nonprofit organizations to build a better community. We join together to take action on social justice issues affected by public policy, beginning with the problem of mass incarceration in Wisconsin. We are an affiliate of WISDOM, a statewide network of organizations like ours. MOSES had its formal commitment ceremony in November 2012, so we were 6 years old in November 2018. We welcome faith communities, individuals, and other partners to join MOSES in building community and addressing issues of social injustice.

We seek to:

- Deliver a message of hope, healing, and unity that reaches beyond the divisions of race, creed, and social-economic barriers.
- Build solid relationships with one another and with the greater community.
- Identify and take action on root causes of poverty, oppression, and injustice.
- Empower and train leaders to respond to injustices at local, state, and national levels.
- Be agents of change that build upon and create strong and just communities.
- Begin a discussion on social justice issues and their possible solutions in our communities.

To create change, MOSES uses:

- **Connection:** Relating to each other and to those in our community, including those different from ourselves;
- **Education:** Helping communities better understand the public policy issues that affect our lives;
- **Training:** Enhancing our abilities to act as leaders;
- **Advocacy:** Speaking with a common voice so public policy better reflects our common values;
- **Action:** Moving beyond the walls of our congregations to make our presence felt and to transform our communities.

Working Locally, Throughout the State of Wisconsin, and Across the Nation

MOSES is part of a powerful statewide organization, WISDOM, which has 11 other congregation-based affiliates across the state that work to live out their values in the world. WISDOM is a member of the Gamaliel Foundation, a national network that works to address issues of justice. While MOSES maintains its own leadership board, bylaws, and finances and selects its issues locally, our partnership with WISDOM and Gamaliel allows us to work together at the state and national level when needed.

MOSES is Nonpartisan

As an organization that works to address systemic change, we are often engaged in public policy affairs. However, we do not endorse candidates or parties. We believe in the need to build relationships with all elected officials, state and local, and in the need to hold public officials accountable, no matter what party they represent.

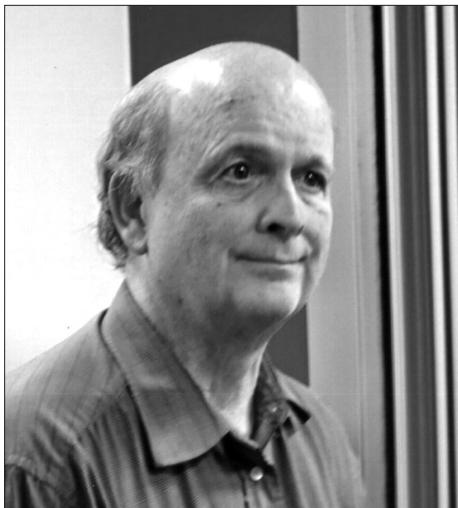
MOSES Executive Committee:

- Eric Howland, *President*
Talib Akbar, *Designated Vice President*
Alison Mix, *Vice President*
Janice Greening, *Treasurer*
Barbie Jackson, *Secretary*
Sister Joan Duerst, *Chair, Religious Leaders Caucus*

MOSES Staff:

- Frank Davis, *Community Organizer*

From the President:



Eric Howland, President of MOSES

Last year my president’s message lifted up MOSES’ role in public discussion within Dane County. Our efforts succeeded in raising awareness about the unconscionably large number of people with mental health issues housed in the Dane County Jail. Our work was rewarded when County Executive Joe Parisi added money to the 2018 county budget to study the intersection of mental health services and the criminal justice system. This study explicitly includes examination of a potential crisis/restoration center, where people experiencing a mental health crisis can be stabilized without arrest or incarceration.

In that 2017 president’s message I also noted the marked difference between our effectiveness at the county level and our relative inability to influence state policy. In last year’s political climate, the latter was a result of finding few state legislators willing to work with us.

I’m happy to say that this year we can celebrate our success in state politics, particularly in moving our issues into public debate during the fall state elections. At the gubernatorial candidates’ forum organized by our umbrella

organization, WISDOM, candidates were asked to go on record supporting specific actions on six reforms to the criminal justice system, such as ending the use of incarceration for crimeless rule violations and calling for an independent review of every case of a person eligible for parole, with the goal of releasing all those who can be released safely. After hearing personal testimonials and in-depth argument supporting our positions, all of the large field of Democratic gubernatorial candidates present, acting in front of cameras, the press, and 700 enthusiastic attendees, uniformly endorsed these positions.

The result was that all of the candidates became educated in these issues, as did the public, with articles and reporting appearing in major news outlets.

Predictably, as the contestants put out their messages, the headlines shifted from these common sense and evidence-based proposals to fear-based attacks from the Republican side. Opponents implied that cutting prison populations would release “violent criminals” into our communities. However, this attempt to bring back tough-on-crime rhetoric turned out to be ineffective.

MOSES can be proud and happy that our efforts have contributed to a political climate supportive of an administration publicly committed to criminal justice reform. WISDOM has followed up by sending five white papers to Governor-elect Tony Evers’s transition team. Evers has responded by appointing two WISDOM members to his criminal justice advisory teams. A lot can change in a year!

Although we now have an administration committed to change in the criminal justice system, that is not going to be enough to make change happen. As Franklin Delano Roosevelt allegedly said to labor leaders, “I agree with you

—I want to do it—now make me do it.”

We are now in the position of “making” the new administration “do it.” Our role in continuing the momentum for criminal justice reform is to create a public awareness of what it means to be “smart on crime” instead of “tough on crime”. MOSES and our allies can join together to create enough public outcry to confront the political resistance to positive change.

We have learned a few things from this year:

- Politicians are most likely to agree when they are in campaigning mode.
- Agreements made need to be recorded and made public.
- A well-organized campaign is necessary to get both the politicians and their supporters into the room.
- Public turnout does matter. One of the unsuccessful candidates said our forum was the largest he attended, which made him focus on the importance of the issues brought up.
- Work on voter turnout was key in this election, in both creating new voters and informing voters.
- Political despair is unwarranted. We can win!
- The election is not the end of the campaign.

Last year we made good progress with the Dane County Board of Supervisors, yet the state legislators and the Department of Corrections seemed intractable. Now we have support at both state and county levels. While there is not yet a clear path to reform, we have generated significant impetus and support. I look forward to beginning the president’s report of 2019 with, “Well, the Governor agreed with us — he wanted to do it — and, by gum, we made him do it!” ■

Tireless campaigner against solitary confinement

WISDOM and MOSES have raised up solitary confinement in Wisconsin’s prisons and jails as an issue from the outset, through various initiatives, written materials and other actions determined by WISDOM’s Solitary Confinement Task Force, which meets via monthly conference calls. But one individual, through his dedication and persistence, stands apart as a hero in his efforts to change solitary confinement practices in Wisconsin. That individual is MOSES and EXPO member Talib Akbar.

The Play

Akbar, whose play “Like an Animal in a Cage” exposes the inhumanity of solitary confinement practices, reminds us that the United Nations has declared solitary confinement for longer than 15 days to be torture. Yet Wisconsin has confined people for many months and sometimes even years, and it continues to do so.

The idea of the play came to Akbar a couple of years ago. He spoke with WISDOM state director David Liners about his desire to use theater to bring alive the experience of solitary confinement. Initially, Liners put Akbar in touch with Tonen O’Connor, an 86-year-old woman and former actor, who new a man who had committed suicide after being held in solitary confinement. This experience became a strong motivation for her to advocate for change.

Akbar talked about his idea for the play with O’Connor who agreed to co-produce it. They created the events of the play and ultimately the script from actual incident reports documenting the basis for punishing individuals for their actions, as well as from O’Connor’s knowledge about the man who had committed suicide.

The play, performed five times in

2018, includes scenes of what happens when a person is taken out of their cell, e.g., to see the nurse or to review their record. One such scene, depicting Akbar’s own experience, shows him being taken out of his cell only to return and find his cell wrecked and his personal pictures torn off the wall.

By exposing the truth in this way, through enactments and personal testimonies of what people have experienced as victims of the system and its abusive practices, the stories have power to affect the viewer deeply, says Akbar. The actors include three formerly incarcerated people who perform the roles of inmates, others who play officers and prison staff, a narrator, and a host, a formerly incarcerated person who gives personal testimony.

In early November, Beloit College honored Akbar by scheduling a two-day event that included a performance of the play at the Beloit College Theater, two six-hour showings of the solitary confinement truck he created, full accommodations for Akbar to stay in their guest house, and \$300 per day. These funds allowed Akbar to support other performers for overnight stays and to make donations to MOSES, EXPO, and First Congregational Church for their support of his efforts.

The Model and the Truck

Akbar and Edgewood College created a full-scale model cell based on a sketch Akbar made while in solitary confinement in a Wisconsin prison. but transporting a half-ton cell was challenging. He eventually converted a 19-foot truck he had from his moving business into a fully portable cell.

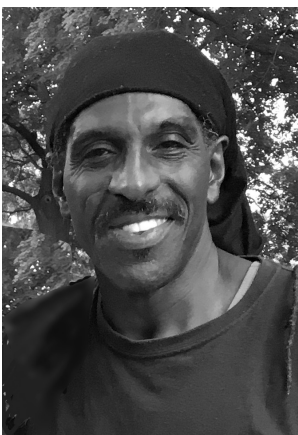
Akbar went to work on his truck project in 2017. While he funded most of the work himself, he is thankful to

MOSES people who helped pay for large-scale posters he had made to display information on the side of the truck.

Since its completion in the fall of 2018, the truck has been shown in several locations and is available for to demonstrate the terrible conditions of solitary confinement. Experiencing the confinement within the truck cell is sobering, particularly when the austere conditions are accompanied by the sounds of banging and yelling, which were recorded from actual conditions. Akbar describes the sounds as “just horrific.” He says the sounds only stop about ten minutes at mealtimes.

Before he could travel outside Madison, Akbar needed to take the truck to the shop to make sure it was sound for traveling. Since then he has put 500 miles on it. It is expensive for him to operate and maintain the truck – for example, it costs about \$40 to get to Milwaukee and back – so donations are very welcome. Thus far, the truck has been on display in Madison and Milwaukee, and at Carroll University in Waukesha..

Akbar welcomes ideas about where to show the truck, to help him continue to promote the need for changes in solitary confinement practices in Wisconsin. People can contact Akbar at switcho453@gmail.com. ■



Talib Akbar

MOSES diversions group explores recommendations

MOSES’ Diversions focus group recently selected three recommendations from Dane County’s Resolution 556 in order to explore how MOSES might aid ongoing efforts to fulfill these recommendations.



The group focused on recommendations of the Alternatives to Arrest and Incarceration Workgroup which align with the goals of its diversions work. Exploration of two of these recommendations has now begun.

Expanding restorative justice
One of the selected recommendations is “Expand Restorative Justice Models Throughout Dane County.” This calls for:

- expansion of community restorative justice for juveniles and adults,
- allowing direct law enforcement and community-based referrals,
- expansion of geographical service areas, and
- expansion of the criteria for eligibility.

Diversions focus group members Karen Julesberg and Barbie Jackson met with Dane County Community Restorative Court (CRC) coordinators Ron Johnson and Stephanie Morino in August, having been present for the latter’s progress report to the Criminal Justice Council (CJC) in July. Karen and Barbie had also attended Peacekeeper Training offered by the CRC last spring. Judge Nicholas McNamara was part of the work group that had asked for this information. He said there are strong reasons for having an interest in this data.

Dane County’s CRC aims to divert young people 17-25 years of age from the criminal justice system by providing a way to resolve their charges and purge their record from the CPAC system. The program has a high success rate for helping people avoid future mistakes and experiences low recidivism. This approach has been shown through national research to be very effective at further crime prevention.

At the July CJC presentation, Stephanie presented detailed statistical analyses indicating that they have 120 open cases at any time, with about 400 total cases per year. To handle more, they would need more staff provision in the budget. Based on their comments, there is broad support for this program among CJC members, who would like to see the program expanded throughout Dane County to a broader range of cases, including criminal cases. In addition to the Dane County municipalities already being served by the program, others have recently been trained, and Ron plans to expand training to all municipalities by the end of 2018. This is important, because referrals cannot be diverted to the CRC in towns which have not yet received CRC citizen training. Pursuing state and local sources of funding, in addition to county funding, will be important to sustain and expand the program.

Ron and Stephanie encouraged

Karen and Barbie to promote the importance of this program to MOSES, with the following suggestions for direct action:

- Become an integral part of restorative justice by attending Peacekeeper Training, which is a prerequisite for being selected for a restorative circle;
- Support a 2018 budget request to Dane County to expand the program by including funding for another staff person in 2019, which is expected to pass, and perhaps seek additional expansion of the program in the 2019 budget.

Peacekeeper Training is offered for four hours on each of four evenings over a two-week period. MOSES members are encouraged to consider participation in this valuable program. For more information on the program and training opportunities, here’s a link to the CRC website: <https://crc.county-ofdane.com>

Seeking Better Jail Data
The second Resolution 556 recommendation the Diversions focus group chose to explore is: “Require the Department of Corrections (DOC) to report weekly to the Dane County Board of Supervisors and the County Executive, as to who is on a probation or parole hold.” This calls for the DOC

to provide the sheriff’s office with length-of-stay data that include date of birth, sex, race, and reason for the hold.

An initial inquiry to Supervisor Paul Rusk led to a follow-up conversation with CJC Coordinator Colleen Clark and then, following her guidelines for raising an issue with the Council, a statement at a CJC meeting last summer about MOSES’ interest in learning more about the status of these data reports. Response to this statement indicated that the data have not yet been reported.

Judge McNamara, who had been a part of the work group that had asked for this information, said there are

strong reasons for having an interest in this data. He indicated that perhaps provision of the data would require extra work from the DOC, but that the work group asking for the data thought this might improve the hold situation. He acknowledged reasons for some of the holds are complex.

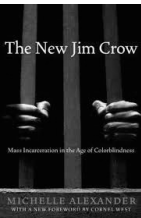
An enthusiastic discussion by members of the CJC ensued about the importance of receiving this data as a means to discern length-of-stay information, to learn about potential racial inequities, to inform possible measures to make improvements, and to work toward reducing holds as the

most promising approach to reducing the population in the jail.

Colleen Clark said the DOC was not represented at the meeting that day because of a reassignment of the former member, and that they were waiting for a new appointment to the Council.

MOSES’ Diversions focus group will continue to explore how MOSES might support this effort and will share with MOSES members as it learns more. ■

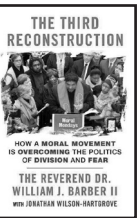
Recommended Reading List



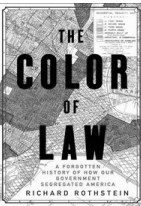
The New Jim Crow:
Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness
by Michelle Alexander



In Warm Blood:
Prison and Privilege, Hurt and Heart
by Judith Gwinn Adrian & Dar’Ren Morris



The Third Reconstruction:
How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear
by Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II



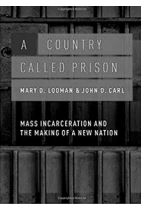
The Color of Law:
A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America
by Richard Rothstein



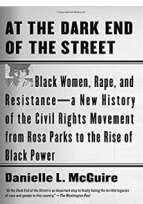
The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace
by Jeff Hobbs



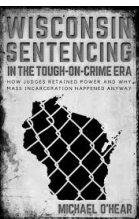
We Are All Criminals
by Emily Baxter



A Country Called Prison:
Mass Incarceration and the Making of a New Nation
by Mary D. Looman & John D. Carl



At the Dark End of the Street:
Black Women, Rape, and Resistance – A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power
by Danielle L. McGuire



Wisconsin Sentencing in the Tough-on-Crime Era:
Do Our Attitudes About Prison Make a Difference to Wisconsin’s Justice System?
by Michael O’Hearn

Youth justice: opportunity for change in Dane County

The issue of youth justice has become a MOSES focus due to the enactment of legislation mandating the closure of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake Juvenile Detention facilities. This will shift responsibility for juvenile justice to counties. Dane County has an opportunity to examine the juvenile justice system that currently exists and create positive change moving forward.

Under Act 185, what happens to youth who are arrested will depend on whether or not there is a court order. (A court order, also known as a correctional order, occurs when a court adjudicates a young person for an act that would be punishable by six months or more for an adult — a felony offense or a Class A misdemeanor.) If there is no court order, there can be treatment alternatives and diversion services.

Understanding Youthful Offenders

The first in a series of educational forums on the topic took place in July and featured Family Court Judge Rev. Everett Mitchell, GSAFE Executive Director Ali Muldrow, and UrbanUnderground's Sharlen Moore.

The panelists spoke about the need to address community issues before deciding to incarcerate young people who break laws, as these youth have all typically suffered some type of childhood trauma, such as poverty, homelessness, violence, racism, and/or neglect.

Racism in Dane County was at the center of the panel's conversation. Members spoke of the school-to-prison pipeline, in which children of color are strikingly more likely to have encounters with law enforcement. The pipeline was described as "an institutionalized empire being built on the backs of



children." Studies show that racial bias can occur as early as preschool.

There was a call for trauma-informed care for youthful offenders. This approach during incarceration has been shown to have the best and longest lasting outcomes. As Judge Mitchell said, "We need to be translators of pain. Just because they act out doesn't mean they are violent."

On September 12, some 40 people met at Damascus Road Church to hear a panel of experts discuss Dane County's evolving response to DOC Act 185. Jim Moeser, retired Dane County Juvenile Court (DCJC) administrator and a long-time worker on youth justice, moderated the panel. Ed Pearson, another panel member, runs the current juvenile detention facility in the City County Building, where the average length of stay is a little over a week. He sees Act 185 as a blessing. Referring to Lincoln Hills, he said, "Some kids don't even get visits from their family because of the distance. The way to lose kids is to not involve their family."

Progress on diversion

Panel member Andre Johnson, Youth Justice manager at Dane County Department of Human Services,

explained that diversion services are much more available since 2011, when there was a major change in Dane County's youth justice system. The result of these changes, which were designed to divert juveniles away from the correctional system, is that about 40 percent of Dane County youths are currently diverted."

"Last week there were 450 kids under supervision in the community, with only a small fraction in corrections," Johnson said. "Another 52 kids are in some kind of residential facility. So that's a credit to staff, who put a lot of time and energy into assessing youth and families." The year 2015 saw the use of more restorative justice systems. Tickets can be held in abeyance while young people take the opportunity of being part of a restorative peer court or circle, where they examine the harm they have caused and develop a "repair harm agreement".

But what about youths who cannot be diverted, who are the subject of a court order? "I don't want to lock kids up," said John Bauman, Dane County Juvenile Court administrator. "Neither does Andre, but there remains a subset of kids who continue to hurt people." These youths are the subject

of Act 185. Right now, unless they have mental health issues, the only place for them is Lincoln Hills. There are currently 13 Dane County youths at Lincoln Hills, a DOC-run "Type 1" facility with fences, locked doors, and 24/7 supervision. Under Act 185, the old options will effectively remain, but one new one will be added:

Those with mental health issues will continue to be sent to the Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center (operated by the Department of Health Services). Indeed, the Act will expand Mendota by at least 29 beds.

Offenders classified as "serious juvenile offender" (SJO), those who have been tried as adults or those deemed "no other resource," will still be sent to one or more new Type 1 facilities run by the DOC. Act 185 provides \$25 million for such a new facility (or new facilities) to be built. Its/their location is still to be decided.

New: a secure residential care facility in Dane County

The third option, however, will be a smaller, county-run Secure Residential Care Center (SRCC). This will be for youths with correctional findings or a county (versus state) correctional order. While still being regulated by the state, these facilities will give counties more autonomy in how they serve youths with correctional orders.

The plan features a 14-bed facility for boys only, with a separate school, an outdoor recreation space, and some additional space. There will be a social worker, treatment plans, coordinated family meetings, and family engagement. Speakers hope the SRCC will create an environment where young people have more power and opportunity to practice new behaviors.

"The whole notion of institutional

control, managing behavior, has to be flipped on its head," said Moeser. "This is counter-intuitive, but important." There will be the opportunity for youths to be furloughed out. They might spend six months in the SRCC, then "graduate" to being allowed out in the community but under a correctional order. If they get into trouble, they can be sent back to the facility. All staff will have been trained in trauma-informed care.

It is estimated that about 80 percent of those in the juvenile system have trauma and 70 percent have some kind of mental illness. Said Moeser: "We still have a long way to go in identifying the trauma and putting resources and services out there."

Racial disparities shocking

While juvenile arrests have been on the decline in Dane County (from more than 10,000 arrests annually in 1988 to about 2,800 now), the disparities have roughly doubled during that period, from three times as many African-Americans as whites arrested then, to six times as many now. About three-quarters of Madison citations are issued to youth of color. Of about 1,600 referrals, well over 1,000 are youth of color.

"There are many disparities in Dane County in every area," Bauman said. "The benefits for many in this community don't go out to all. Unfortunately, we are reactionary. We wish we could affect prevention, but we can't."

Andre Johnson's group has been working to reduce disparities. While acknowledging that there is much more work to do in this area, he said: "There has been a drop of 20 percent in citations of youth of color in one year. We are excited about that."

MOSES has strong presence at community meetings

MOSES members attended two community meetings In November, following several controversial statements about juvenile crime reported in an October issue of the *Wisconsin State Journal*.

At the first of these meetings, on October 24, four MOSES members heard from members of the Madison Police Department reporting on recent crime statistics including repeated car thefts by a few teenagers, a judge speaking about the challenge of limited options for handling these children, and many residents in an audience of about 150 calling for the punishment of these youths with no apparent understanding of the value of humane, restorative practices for addressing crime and reducing recidivism.

Concerned about the conduct and tone of the meeting, we rallied behind the scenes in support of a more balanced presentation at the second meeting on November 5th. About 15 MOSES members with prepared statements and questions attended that gathering. The second meeting gave a more balanced account of the issues. Also, the audience, which had swelled to about 500, was more diverse in its makeup and more balanced in its questions and commentary, which included statements by three MOSES members.

MOSES will continue to seek opportunities to participate in the promotion of good practices for working with young people involved in the criminal justice system by seeking to influence those involved in working toward solutions. ■

New hope for people incarcerated under ‘old laws’

Between the release of Baron Walker, who was featured in the documentary film Milwaukee 53206, in August and the election of Tony Evers as Governor in November, members of WISDOM’s Old Law Parole and Compassionate Release work group have much to celebrate.

Like the other three WISDOM work groups, the Old Law group meets via monthly conference calls. Several MOSES members participate in the monthly calls, though they differ from many members who actually have loved ones incarcerated under the Old Law, i.e., before Wisconsin’s truth-in-sentencing law came into effect on January 1st, 2000. Before that date, when judges sentenced people to prison, they understood that they would be eligible for parole after 25 percent of that time. In those days, most people who applied for parole gained their release within the first few years they were eligible. Last year, the percentage of eligible people released on parole was barely 10 percent, meaning that the vast majority of those who are called “old law” prisoners, numbering about 3,000, are serving much more time than the judges who originally sentenced them had anticipated.

Baron Walker’s family rejoices

This was the case for Baron Walker, whose wife Beverly has long participated in the Old Law conference calls. Sentenced to 60 years in 1996 for participating in a pair of bank robberies, Walker became eligible for parole in 2011. Yet he was denied parole six times and remained in prison, despite having seized every possible opportunity for treatment and



education while incarcerated.

Then, on August 16, a Milwaukee County circuit judge modified Walker’s sentence, allowing him to go home the next day. Modifying a sentence requires an inmate to show a new factor that was not known or considered at his sentencing. For Baron Walker, and hundreds like him, defense attorney Craig Mastantuono argued that the factor is Wisconsin’s sharp change in parole policy since Scott Walker was elected governor.

During the September conference call, Beverly described for us the events that led up to Baron’s release. It had all started two and a half years earlier, following a showing of the documentary Milwaukee 53206,

when Beverly was approached by a gentleman saying he had attorney friends who might help her. Craig Mastantuono, a respected Milwaukee trial attorney, then proceeded to work on Baron’s case on a pro bono basis. On the same call, Baron greeted our members and thanked us, and we offered him our congratulations!

It remains to be seen whether the argument used in Baron Walker’s case will work for other Old Law prisoners. He explained how he did it at a meeting on November 26 in Milwaukee. Milwaukee. The subsequent election of Tony Evers as governor as Governor may in any case change the landscape considerably.

Evers must be held to his commitment on Old Law policy

When asked by WISDOM ahead of the June gubernatorial candidate forum in Pewaukee if he would immediately call for a complete, independent review of every case of a person eligible for parole, with the goal of releasing all those who can be released safely, Evers responded: “Yes. As Governor, I would want a complete evaluation of those policies and the individuals impacted by them.”

Those on the November WISDOM statewide conference call speculated about what steps should be taken to ensure that momentum on the issue is maintained as the new administration takes office in January. One of our members suggested that we make a list of those old law people we know who should be eligible for release under the “safe to return to community” eligibility Tony Evers has promised to recognize. She noted that Evers will be appointing the new head of the DOC, as well as a new Parole commissioner.

We need to decide if we should advocate for a return to the old Parole Commission with its eight members. (Walker reduced it to four.) Should the Commission be accountable to an independent public review board? What about transparency? Can we ask that inmates be allowed to have family members or support persons present at their hearings? We were also asked to think about violent offenders or sex offenders who have served 20 or more years. What about people who have life sentences because of unfair long sentences being served consecutively? Our work group will be pondering all of these questions and more in the coming months as we hope for positive change and for more releases like Baron Walker’s, with all the joy they bring. ■

Post-release task force

In MOSES and WISDOM, our work on issues of mass incarceration is usually performed through task forces. Ideally, everyone who is a MOSES participant would be working on a task force. Unlike the Justice System Reform Task Force, which is our local Dane County task force, the other main task forces are statewide WISDOM groups. The WISDOM Post-Release Task Force includes about ten MOSES members and other people from across the state, especially MICA members in Milwaukee.

After former governor Tommy Thompson wrote an op-ed in April proposing his new approach to employment training for incarcerated people, we met with the director of the Tommy Thompson Center on Public Leadership in an effort to work with more conservatives who were also seeking ways to prevent recidivism. Unfortunately, the scope of the Center’s current activities is quite limited, and they were not open to jointly considering any of our Task Force’s issues. We are still considering possible collaboration with them around the issues of revising statutory barriers to occupational licensing, so that more people can find employment after release.

One of our key issues involves crimeless revocation (when a formerly incarcerated individual is sent back to prison by the DOC for violating a parole rule, not for a new crime). We met with the head of the DOC’s Division of Community Corrections (DCC), who asserts that they have written guidelines and retrained agents to apply lesser sanctions than revocation in many cases. Unfortunately, despite these changes, the rate of crimeless revocation has not decreased. In fact, Wisconsin exceeds the national average for crimeless revocations. Our next step will be to work with the Legislature to require changes in the DOC’s rate of crimeless revocations.

A couple of years ago, the MOSES members of the Post-Release Task Force were successful in getting the City of Madison to pass an excellent Ban the Box ordinance. Several other Task Force members across the state moved to do the same in their local communities. The Task Force is hoping that a change in legislative control in the November elections will be a new basis from which to advocate for a statewide Ban the Box statute applicable to all public and private employers, as 11 other states have done. The current high rate of employment makes this an opportune time to seek greater restrictions against employment discrimination based on prior arrest or conviction.

The Post-Release Task Force has important advocacy to pursue, and we welcome more participants. In addition to our advocacy with policymakers, we meet once a month by conference call, on the 4th Thursday, at 7:30 p.m. Please join us by calling (605) 468-8012, code 423051#. ■

Women behind bars: a growing population

Across the country, we find a disturbing gender disparity in recent prison population trends. While recent reforms have reduced the total number of people in state prisons since 2009, almost all of the decrease has been among men. Wisconsin women’s prison population grew while men’s prison population declined

The need for targeted attention to women’s incarceration

Separate from the bigger picture of mass incarceration, women’s incarceration demands more attention because of the distinct ways in which prisons and jails fail women and their families. Research consistently shows that incarcerated women face different problems than men — and prisons often make those problems worse. While not a comprehensive list, some of the major issues facing incarcerated women include:

- Women are more likely to enter prison with a history of abuse, trauma, and mental health problems. But even in the “secure” prison environment, women face sexual abuse by correctional staff or other incarcerated women, and are more likely than men to experience serious psychological distress. (This is to say nothing of girls who are victimized in juvenile facilities or the abuse of incarcerated transgender women.) Treatment for trauma and mental health problems is often inadequate or unavailable in prisons.
- Women have different physical health needs, including reproduc-



tive healthcare, management of menopause, nutrition, and very often treatment for substance use disorders. Again, the health systems in prisons — designed for men — frequently fail to meet these basic needs.

- Most women in prison (62%) are mothers of minor children. These women are more likely than fathers in prison to be the primary caretakers of their children, so the increasing number of women in prisons means more and more family disruption and insecurity. Incarcerated women and their families suffer from lack of face-to-face contact: because there are fewer women’s prisons, women are more likely to be held in prisons located far from home, making visits difficult and expensive. To make matters worse, if children are placed in foster care when their mother is incarcerated, her prison sentence can sever family ties permanently.

- Economically, women with a history of incarceration face particularly daunting obstacles when they return to their communities. Even before they are incarcerated, women in prison earn less than men in prison, and earn less than non-incarcerated women of the same age and race. Women’s prisons do not meet the need or demand for vocational and educational program opportunities. And once released, the collateral consequences of incarceration make finding work, housing, and financial support even more difficult.

MOSES will continue to work to meet the needs of incarcerated women and support statewide efforts to reduce overcrowding, provide re-entry services, and end the practice of shackling pregnant women. ■

MOSES picnic: Good food, good music, & good cheer ruled the day!

The weather threatened, but our buoyancy and celebratory good cheer ruled the day. Nary a drop of rain nor a clap of thunder arose to dampen our spirits!

About 50 MOSES members and families attended our potluck picnic on a beautiful Thursday evening within and outside the Burrows Park Shelter on Madison’s east side. While adults mingled together for conversation and sharing of a wide array of delicious food and beverage, children played with the various lawn games and ran from one activity to another with glee.

After a little while Talib Akbar,

Deborah Adkins, and Eric Howland brought out their drums and percussion instruments and serenaded us with vibrant sound. Then we settled down and enjoyed the inspirational singing of new member Andrea Harris and her friend Cliff. After the singing, Barbie Jackson rounded up hearty souls who were game for sailboat rides offered by a few members of the Mendota Yacht Club, with a pretty good breeze that carried several boatloads of riders all the way to Memorial Union and back.

But the bravest one of all was Talib, who allowed three bags full of

water balloons to be pelted at him, to the squeals and giggles of the children along with a few hefty shots by Deb and a certain Dane County supervisor who shall remain unnamed.

As sunset approached in the overcast sky, a rainbow began to form in the southwest. Soon it reached all the way across the sky to bless the closing of our celebration. A few more parting beats of the drums carried people off with their belongings and happy memories for all. Alison Mix commented to Barbie that this should certainly become an annual event! ■



PHOTOGRAPHY: Tina Hogle



Describing a better future for people with mental illness

One of the significant issues driving the population in the Dane County Jail is the number of people who experience a contact with police due to a behavioral manifestation of their mental health issues. There are many reasons these people end up in the jail. Often it is because there are no better alternatives in Dane County. This is unacceptable.

The Crisis/Restoration Center workgroup of the MOSES Justice System Reform Initiative advocates for a better mental health care system in Dane County, and a reduction in the number of people with mental health issues who are incarcerated. We were pleased to see County Executive Joe Parisi include funding in the 2018 budget to study gaps in the mental health services delivery system. We decided to contribute to the community conversation on this matter by concisely describing the kind of changes we believe are needed, using a planning tool called Desired Future Conditions.

Desired Future Condition (DCF) statements describe what the future looks like, or the way that it works. They are a powerful tool for bringing together varied interests, even opposing parties, in support of a common vision for the future.

A Desired Future Condition (DFC) statement is similar to a goal or an objective. However, there are a couple of key differences. It is written:

- using a **present-tense verb**, as if it has already been accomplished, and
- **without any regard to limitations** of resources or time.

We began by rewriting the Guiding Principles in Resolution 556 into the form of DFC statements. Various members of our workgroup proposed additional DFCs. On March 10, our workgroup met for 4 hours to work through the 24 draft statements, one by one. We clarified the wording, combined statements where appropriate, added other important details, etc. We finalized the document in April with 15 DFC statements describing the future we envision.

The title of the document is long, but precisely descriptive: "Improving Mental Health Treatment in Dane County and Keeping People Out of the Criminal Justice System." Here is the introductory preamble:

"The criminal justice system is not designed to meet the needs of people needing mental health care. Yet, today, a large portion of people in the Dane County Jail have mental health issues (nearly 40% are receiving psychotropic medications) and there is a high racial disparity in this population. Many stakeholders in the county are now working to reduce the number of people with mental health issues who are incarcerated in the jail and are searching for effective approaches to achieve this objective. As a contribution to this effort, MOSES (Madison Organizing in Strength, Equality, and Solidarity) offers the following Desired Future Conditions to describe an improved criminal justice system, an improved mental health care delivery system, and the kind of community in which we desire to live."

The 15 Desired Future Condition statements address four areas:

- the mental health care delivery system in Dane County,
- the crucial role that a Crisis/Restoration Center could play in mental health crisis management situations,
- Dane County Jail policies and procedures regarding people with mental health issues, and
- general administration and management issues.

The Desired Future Conditions document has been shared with key stakeholders in the county but needs wider distribution. We certainly plan to share it, and advocate its substance, with the contractor who is selected to conduct the study of mental health services in Dane County. We are also encouraged by the siting of a new psychiatric hospital in Middleton that may provide important services to help keep people out of the criminal justice system.

While we await the county study, the Crisis/Restoration Center workgroup recently developed and presented to county board committees recommendations for mental health programs in the 2019 county budget. These include:

Expand Re-entry Coordination capacity, by increasing the part-time position to full-time (Sheriff's Dept.), so that everyone being released from the jail into the Dane County community has a plan and follow-up services for a minimum of 6 months. This is especially

The criminal justice system is not designed to meet the needs of people needing mental health care...

important for people who have mental health and/or substance abuse issues. Invest/focus resources on people identified as "Familiar Faces" in the Dane County jail population.

Continue and expand:

- Restorative Justice courts/programs.
- Use of community service "sentences" in lieu of incarceration for low level offenses.
- The number and reach of mobile crisis response staff/teams.
- The participation of certified peer counselors (support specialists) in providing assistance to people involved in mental health and AODA programs.
- Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for first responders, jail staff, and others.
- Establish outreach and case management services for people who need assistance navigating medical and other social services, who otherwise do not qualify for case management through existing programs.
- Continue engagement of community groups in the effort to establish best practices in our criminal justice systems to eliminate racial disparities and reduce the number of people with mental health and substance abuse issues in the justice system.

We have optimism that improvements in mental health services in Dane County and reductions in the number of people with mental health issues in the jail are achievable in the near future. It will require diligent advocacy and pursuit of our vision to make it happen. We must make our voices heard. ■

Desired Future Condition Statements: a Sampling

There is timely access to effective mental health care for everyone in Dane County through a coordinated system of providers, regardless of payer status. Trauma-informed care practices are an essential part of the system.

Case management (identification of needs and coordination of services) is available to all individuals who need it, bridging provider and agency boundaries. Peer support specialists are involved throughout the system.

A Crisis/Restoration Center (providing mental health urgent care services 24 hours a day) is available to anyone in the community needing such services. The Crisis/Restoration Center provides immediate triage and stabilization followed by seamless/uninterrupted access to community services for longer-term treatment as needed. These services include treatment for co-occurring substance abuse disorders as needed.

Dane County embraces and has established policies and procedures to direct people with mental illness who have a police contact to a treatment facility or program rather than into the criminal justice system. All First Responders are trained to identify and respond appropriately to people having a mental health crisis.

The Department of Corrections, Division of Community Corrections proactively determines needs for services for those on probation and supervision and assures that appropriate clients receive treatment from the mental health care delivery system as a way of improving compliance with rules, in lieu of probation holds and seeking revocation to state prison.

Jail intake personnel are trained and empowered to identify people with mental health issues who need to be diverted to the Crisis/Restoration Center.

The jail emphasizes continuity of care for people with mental health issues. This care includes connecting with providers in the community, maintaining current medications, and doing reentry planning that connects individuals to mental health and other supportive services when they are released.

2018 Gala: Transformation Celebration

Honoring Transformation

MOSES lifted up the lives of three individuals for their perseverance, talent, and success in transforming their own lives and helping to positively transform the lives of people who are and have been incarcerated. Our honorees have given people hope, skills, and tools for restoration and wholeness.

Minister Eugene Smalls

*Chaplain in five Wisconsin prisons and
Minister at Madison Pentecostal Church*

Carmella Glenn

Project Coordinator, Just Bakery

James Morgan

*Peer Support Specialist, Madison-Area Urban
Ministries*



In gratitude to those whose donations made this annual celebration possible:

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- Sister Joan Duerst
- Janice Greening
- Andrea Harris
- Sister Fran Hoffman
- Tina Hogle
- Rachel Morgan

Special thanks to the many volunteers that sold tickets, set up, and decorated.

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Check out the MOSES website: www.mosesmadison.org.
Attend a monthly meeting (usually the first weekend of the month, check the event calendar on the MOSES website for date and time.)

Get involved...
Serve on a task force or committee. Volunteer for an action.
Participate in a training. Testify at a hearing.

Donate...
Donations in any amount are always welcome! As an affiliate of WISDOM, MOSES shares in WISDOM’s 501(c)3 status, so your donation is tax-deductible. The more financial support MOSES receives from our members — congregational, or- ganizational, and individual — and friends, the less time we need to spend organizing fundraising or seeking and writing for grants. Ways to support MOSES financially:

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- **Donate using a credit or debit card or a PayPal account**, by going to the MOSES website donations page (<http://mosesmadison.org/volunteer-donate/>) and clicking on the “Donate” button.
- **Enroll in monthly giving.** Another advantage of being an affiliate of WISDOM is that MOSES, like the other affiliates across the state, is able to participate in WISDOM’s coordination of an electronic giving program through electronic funds transfer. Download the form from the MOSES website donations page (<http://mosesmadison.org/volunteer-donate/>)

For more information, or if you have any questions, please email the MOSES Treasurer at treasurer@mosesmadison.org.

Thank you for your support

December 2017–December 2018

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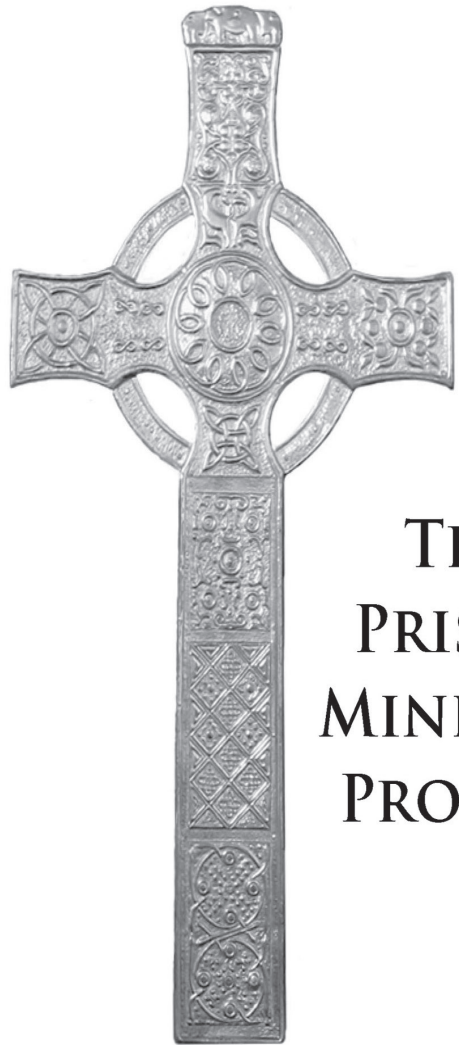


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Thanks, Jim! We will miss you and that smile. We honor your charge: "There is work to be done!" and will try to take on that work with the energy and graciousness you demonstrated.

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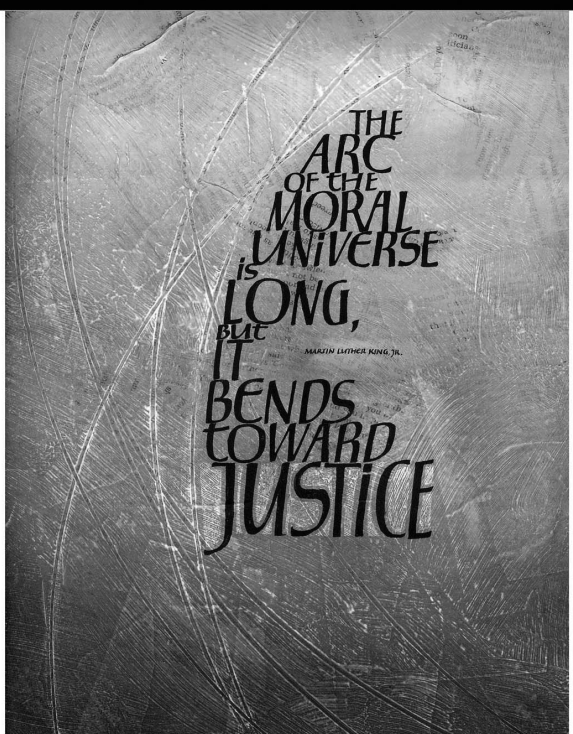


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Standing with MOSES.

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Reaching out in ever-widening circles as witnesses of God's all-inclusive love.

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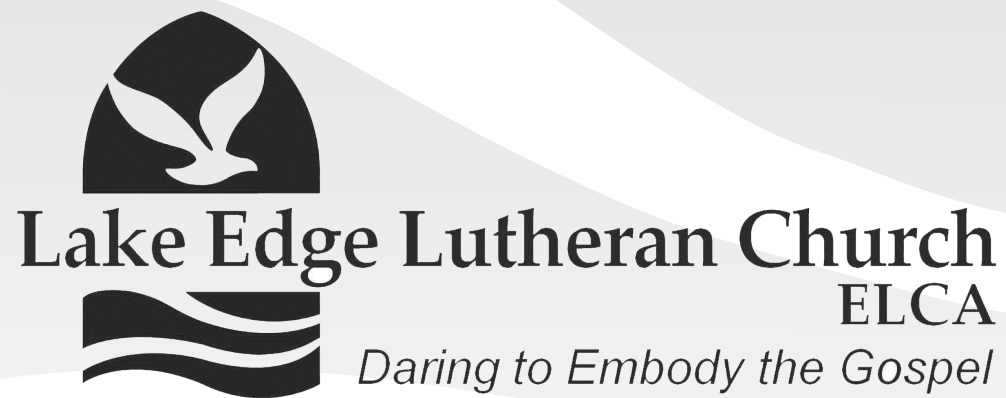


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"For freedom Christ has set us free."
Galatians 5:1

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Feel free to contact Fawn Bilgere



**By the people,
For the people** Dorothy Krause
Sigh

Yet again, power mongers in state government have been working to limit the ability to implement the values of the people.

Claiming they seek balance in government, they are really more fully consolidating power for the extreme right and eliminating opportunity for changes that will benefit people over profit.

Over the next 2 years, we have to help raise the voices of the people and help make sure they can vote in 2020.

We need to help people understand what is happening and get them to pass on the word that we can take the state back for the people. It will take all of us, working together!

It's About Priorities

I want to live in a society in which we can all be proud. I want everyone in our society to have at least enough to meet their most basic needs and I want the rest of us to be proud to live in such a society.



Dane County Board of Supervisors, Dist 27
Fitchburg Common Council, Dist 1 Seat 1
facebook.com/dorothy.krause | dorothyk@charter.net



First United
Methodist Church

fumc.org

**DOWNTOWN
FOR**
Good

**SUNDAY WORSHIP
9:00 am & 11:15 am**

**WEDNESDAY COMMUNITY
BREAKFAST**

9:00 am

**COME AS YOU ARE
WORSHIP**

9:30 am

"Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with your God."
—Micah 6:8

Supporting **MOSES**
in their work for
JUSTICE & EQUITY

creating a
more
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is now
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And we still believe in MOSES!

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FOR ALL

Chris

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rep.taylor@legis.wi.gov

*If there is no struggle, there is
no progress.*

— Fredrick Douglass



St. Dunstan's strives to seek, love, and serve God. We welcome all to join us as we:

- + Gather in worship
- + Serve people in need
- + Care for our world
- + Listen to one another in love

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<http://madisonfriends.org>
Our values support MOSES and criminal justice reform

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.

—Desmond Tutu

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WEGLEITNER

Dane County Board • District 2
FriendsOfHeidi.org

*Courage
In Hard
Times*



In the 2019 Budget process, Heidi led successful efforts to double the County's affordable housing fund and increase funding for supportive housing programs for chronically homeless individuals.
#HousingNotHandcuffs

AUTHORIZED AND PAID FOR BY FRIENDS OF HEIDI WEGLEITNER, DIANE FARSETTA TREASURER



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Sunday Worship Service at 10 a.m.

jruuc.org • 608-242-8887



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Christ Presbyterian Church is delighted to be serving with MOSES, an outstanding and effective organization seeking true justice for all.

944 E. Gorham St. Madison, WI 53703

cpcmadison.org

Sunday Services 9am & 11am

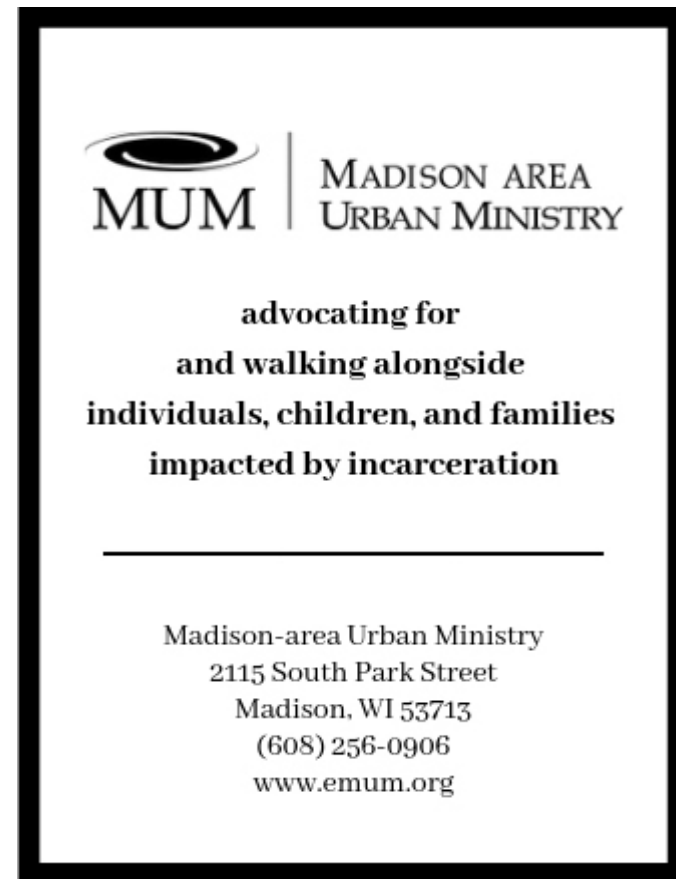
ROC Wisconsin Prayer

God of healing and restoration, we pray:

For all who are caught up in the criminal justice system, those in our jails and prisons, and for their families, that they will know healing and restoration;

For those with the difficult duties of corrections officers and parole officers, that they will be able to be agents of healing and restoration;

For political leaders and all citizens, that they will demand and create a just, humane criminal justice system. God of all, restore our people and restore our communities.



John Mix

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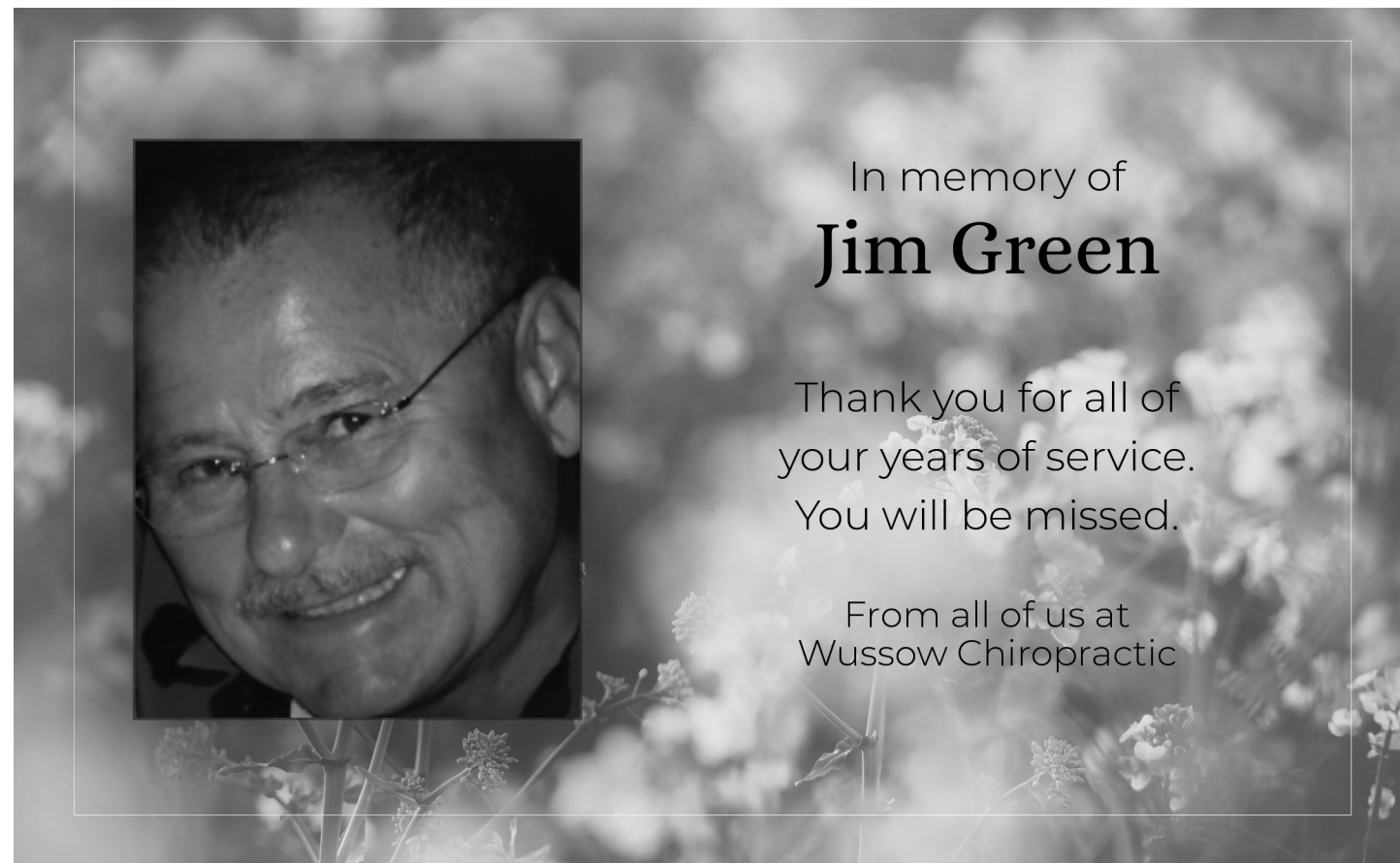
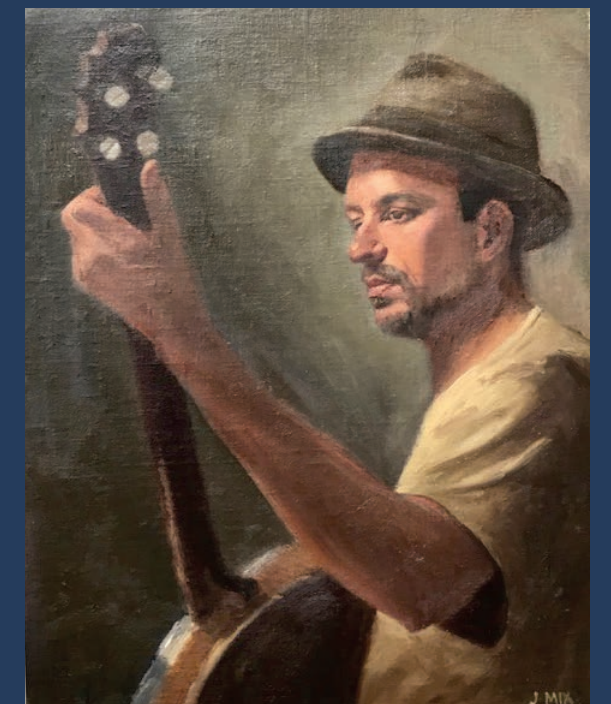


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