



Church of the Brethren

Announcements, Announcements, Announcements! **September 21st, 2010**

Friends, thus far I have limited action alerts to one issue, and a specific action for you to take. However, with Congress back in session for such a short time right now, below you will find a smorgasbord of options for ways you can get involved, and let your faith be spoken to better bring forth the realm of God. Thanks for all that you do!

- 1) [Join the National Council of Churches for a National Teleconference for Prayer and Action to End Gun Violence.](#)
 - 2) [Come to DC and let your voice be heard. Two upcoming opportunities for action.](#)
 - 3) [Recent Census poverty data provokes a call for action. Get involved with Fighting Poverty with Faith in your local community!](#)
 - 4) [Child Nutrition Reauthorization is currently before the House of Representatives. Contact your representative.](#)
 - 5) [Save the date – 2011 Ecumenical Advocacy Days](#)
 - 6) Hourly prayer updates TODAY for the International Day of Prayer for Peace. Join us in prayer via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), or the [Brethren Blog](#).
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- 1) Gun violence is devastating communities throughout our nation, and as a *pastor or local church leader*, you know that churches are profoundly feeling its effects. Each year, 100,000 Americans are shot. Many die, while even more suffer wounds that may last a lifetime. The problem has a profound impact on all of us, but not in equal proportion. The gospel mandates that Christians love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:39). In this spirit of love in action, the 36 member communions of the National Council of Churches voted in May, through the Governing Board, to work in ecumenical partnership toward eliminating gun violence from our communities. Join us at **3:30 p.m. EDT on September 23, 2010** for a national, ecumenical teleconference to pray for our children's safety, and to strategize the faith community's role in combating gun violence.
 - a. **Where:** Call in #: 218- 632-0693; Access Code: 348812
 - b. **Click here to register, for this important call.**
- 2) There are two opportunities to come to DC in the next few weeks, and let your voice be heard on issues of justice:
 - a. God charges us to be stewards of God's creation (Genesis 1:28, 2:15), and with that charge comes the duty to use the earth's resources in a responsible and sustainable manner. Mountaintop removal (MTR) is a form of coal mining that

uses explosives to remove the tops of mountains and expose the coal located deep within the mountain. It is a cheaper and faster alternative to traditional mining, but the damage it causes to the environment and to humans and other creatures living nearby far outweighs the benefits. MTR is both immensely destructive and irresponsible, so allowing its practice to continue would be to neglect our call to care for all of creation. September 25th and 26th is Appalachia Rising: Voices from the Mountains - a conference held in Washington DC calling for the abolition of mountaintop removal and surface mining in Appalachia. It is a time for the national movement against strip mining to assemble and grow through a weekend of strategizing, workshops, learning, and cultural events. Click [here](#) for more information.

- b. October 2nd is a rally in DC for peace and justice. Co-sponsored by our partners Interfaith Worker Justice and many other faith partners, The One Nation March will feature human and civil rights leaders, labor leaders, environmental and peace activists, faith leaders, celebrities and sports figures – all marching together to help Put America Back to Work and to Pull America Back Together. And to help reorder our national priorities so that investments in people come first. Click [here](#) for more information.
- 3) Last week, the United States Census Bureau released the 2009 poverty data, and the numbers are a clear call to action. The nation's official poverty rate in 2009 was 14.3 percent, up from 13.2 percent in 2008 — the second statistically significant annual increase in the poverty rate since 2004. There were 43.6 million people in poverty in 2009, up from 39.8 million in 2008 — the third consecutive annual increase. People of faith across the country are responding through an interfaith initiative called Fighting Poverty with Faith – a month of action in October. Click [here](#) for more information, and to get involved in your local community.
 - 4) While hunger is a problem that affects people of all ages, it is particularly devastating for the more than 12 million children in its grasp. Childhood hunger and malnutrition impair proper physical development, generate behavioral issues like aggression and absenteeism, and cause emotional problems like anxiety and depression. Often overlooked are the effects of hunger on cognitive development, including decreased attention and lower test scores. The consequences of child hunger are broad and long-lasting and ultimately limit educational achievement and workforce productivity. Thus, there is both a moral and an economic imperative to address this problem. Child nutrition programs safeguard the well-being of America's children by reducing hunger and increasing access to high-quality, nutritious foods. Programs like the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), school breakfast and lunch programs, and preschool, summer and afterschool meal programs are vital in providing children the food they need for healthy development. Unfortunately, these programs do not reach all children in need of food and quality nutrition. Many eligible children do not have access to programs or face other barriers to participation, whether because of unnecessarily burdensome administrative rules, confusing eligibility provisions that lack coordination with other agencies, or inadequate implementation in many states. Click [here](#) to call on your representative to pass a robust Child Nutrition Reauthorization that gets food to the kids who need it the most.

- 5) The theme and dates for Ecumenical Advocacy Days have been announced! Mark your calendars now to join with more than 700 other Christians in advocating on behalf of women around the world:

a. **Development, Security and Economic Justice: What's Gender Got to Do with It?**

Gender's got a lot to do with it! As Proverbs recognized long ago, women's contributions are integral to enriching social, religious, and family life. However - in homes and communities, out in fields and marketplaces, along borders and in areas of conflict -- violence, poverty, and other social evils disproportionately affect women, keeping them from attaining their full potential and impacting the wholeness and vibrancy of the community.

As women and men of faith, we can be a formidable force for change! Come to Ecumenical Advocacy Days, March 25-28, 2011, in Washington, DC. During these days filled with worship and dialogue, we will be inspired and equipped to speak boldly on behalf of all God's daughters and the betterment of communities.

Together we'll advocate on Capitol Hill for women and girl's physical and emotional safety, their economic security and freedom, and promote people-centered ecologically-sustainable development, economic justice and peace for the flourishing of all our communities.

Prepare now to hear from internationally known policy experts, stimulating theologians and inspiring preachers -- along with Administration officials, Congressional aids and advocacy specialists.

[REGISTER NOW](#) for "Development, Security and Economic Justice: What's Gender Got to Do with It?"

Church of the Brethren Policy: The 1977 Annual Conference Statement "[Justice and Nonviolence](#)" reads: "Our understanding of the mind of Christ demands of us vigorous non-violent involvement and identification with the poor and the oppressed, all the while acknowledging our limitation and confessing our complicity in the evils addressed. We also recognize that these problems (evils) are massive, complex, and ambiguous and that we lack perfect knowledge. We believe, however, that Christian discipleship demands decision and action to help achieve greater justice and peace in our time."

For more information about the witness ministries of the Church of the Brethren, contact Jordan Blevins, Advocacy Officer for the Church of the Brethren:

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