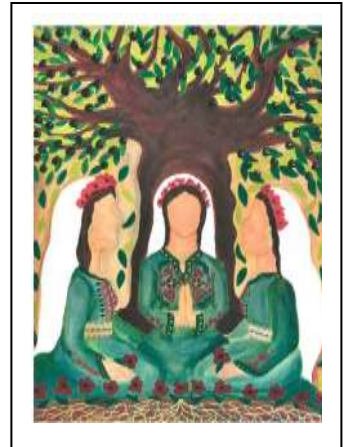


Church Women United Peoria Area March 2024 Information Sheet



WELCOME TO CWU PEORIA AREA
as we celebrate the World Day of
Prayer on **SATURDAY, March 2 at**
10:00 AM, at Glen Oak Christian
Church, 1115 E Republic, 61603



In an effort to reach out to more individuals during the 2024 year, we will be trying a different day and time for our annual World Day of Prayer. Please invite others from your congregation both women and men to join us for this meaningful celebration.

World Day of Prayer
Saturday, March 2, 2024 10:00 AM

The 2024 WDP comes to us from ecumenical Christian women of the World Day of Prayer Palestine. Most of us, especially recently, have heard of Palestine, a tiny spot in the Middle East, that for over 3,000 years has been significant to three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. However, the region is much older and has had many names, depending on the many tribes that have settled at different times in the land. The land is in a strategic position as a crossroad to three continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe.

History The region has witnessed the invasion of various powers throughout its history, including the Assyrians (8th century BCE), Babylonians (c.601 BCE), Persians (539 BCE), and Romans (63 BCE). Jesus was born during the era of Roman rule and was crucified by an alliance between political and religious authorities. During the 4th century, Constantine made Christianity the religion of the Holy Roman Empire. In the 7th century, Muslim rulers conquered Palestine, followed by the Crusaders, the Egyptians, and the Mongols. In the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire invaded and ruled the region until the end of World War I. At that time, the Middle East was divided between the English and the French. After the end of World War II, support for the creation of a homeland for Jews in Palestine increased. Israel was created in 1948. The UN had adopted Resolution 181, which called for the creation of 2 independent states (Palestine and Israel), as well as a special international status for the city of Jerusalem. This was not implemented. In 1988, Palestine proclaimed its independence only on the land Israel had occupied since 1967. As of July 2019, 138 of the 193 United Nations member states have recognized Palestine as a state.

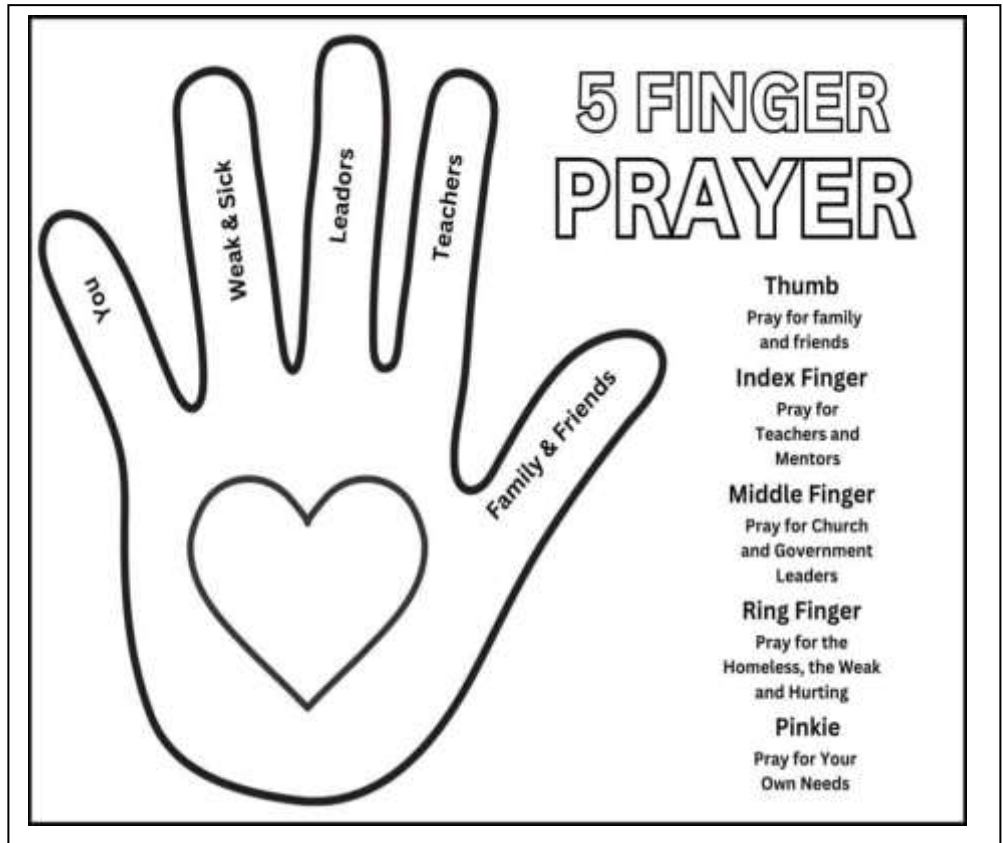
Religion Of the over 5 million Palestinians living in Palestine and Israel, 2% are Christian. The Church in Palestine is a living church with a special mission and vocation. 75% of the Palestinian Christians are from the Greek Orthodox Church. Others include Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic Melkite Church, the Assyrian Orthodox Church, the Assyrian Catholic Church, the Armenian Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Lutheran Church, the Coptic Church, the Ethiopian Church, the Franciscan Custodians of the Holy Land, and the Maronite Church. There is also a Baptist, Presbyterian, and United Methodist presence in Palestine. Christians in Palestine have worked to develop an ecumenical spirit. This is not perfect, but they have carried out the message of the Resurrection of Jesus uninterruptedly for two thousand years. Christians in Palestine continually derive courage from a deeply rooted faith. They strive to live the message of Jesus Christ, who proclaimed equality, justice, and forgiveness for all.

Collage if you can bring pictures from magazines or newspapers showing what Palestinian women are bearing in their context or in the world, we can discuss them. We could also make a collage of them. Submitted by Kathy Simpson



As we celebrate World Day of Prayer with everyone around the world, I pondered what I was taught about prayer. I, of course, was taught the Lord's Prayer in Sunday School but don't remember much else being taught from my childhood. (Was I listening to my Sunday School teacher?) What I have learned came from listening to others

pray. I have always thought that praying was a conversation with God which might be why I ramble through my prayers much like I talk. When my children were in Sunday School, they were taught about a 5-finger prayer. They even traced their hand on paper, cut it out and pasted it to a popsicle stick. On each finger was what you should pray for and why you prayed in this manner. That was an AHHA moment for me of sorts. I still ramble in my prayers but I do know that God is listening. "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." Romans 12:12 Renee



Membership Dues 2024 Have you paid your 2024 membership dues of \$10.00? Please complete the form and send your dues renewal to Sherry Emerick 5812 Sioux Trail, Bartonville, IL 61607. You can also recognize your church support of Church Women United by including a church membership gift on the same form.

2024 Membership form for both Individual and Church memberships

Circle one or both:

Individual membership Dues \$10.00

Church Membership Dues (flexible donation, \$100, \$75, \$50, other amount)

Individual Name _____

Church name: _____

Amount submitted or enclosed: _____

Please send to Sherry Emerick, 5812 Sioux Trail, Bartonville, IL 61607 or pay at the monthly CWU-PA meeting





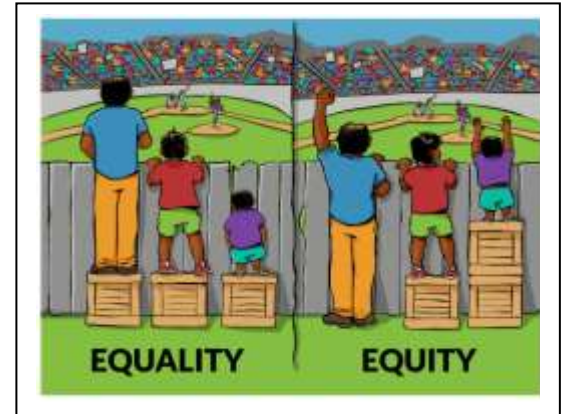
The **February General Membership Meeting**

of CWU-PA was held on Friday, February 2 at Mosaic Christian Church. There were 16 in attendance representing 7 churches and 4 denominations. The program was presented by Reverend Amy Johnson who is pictured here with Mosaic Christian Church minister Reverend April McClure-Stewart. The program highlighted a grass roots group that meets on a regular basis to learn about current issues and topics. The group frequently meets and discusses issues, welcomes guest speakers and reads books which highlight areas of interest. The group is Women for Equity. If anyone is interested they may contact Reverend April McClure-Stewart at Mosaic Christian Church for meeting times and locations.



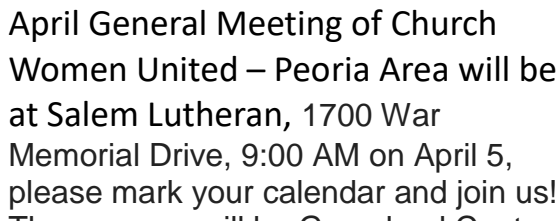
During our February CWU-PA Board meeting we reflected on the February program and the discussion led to equality vs, equity. Here is a graphic that is frequently used to illustrate the difference between these two concepts. Equality provides the same “box” for all but not everyone can accomplish the task of seeing over the fence. Equity provides a “box”, though different in size, for each person that will let everyone accomplish the task of seeing over the fence. Please feel free to read more about this graphic and concepts.

<https://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/>



April General Meeting of Church Women United – Peoria Area will be at Salem Lutheran, 1700 War Memorial Drive, 9:00 AM on April 5, please mark your calendar and join us! The program will be Graceland Center

for Purposeful Aging and the programs that are being offered. One fact that has been shared is that there is no Senior Citizen Center in Peoria. Following the program there will be a general business meeting.



Are you interested in learning more about the National Church Women United or the Illinois State Church Women United? Both have informative web sites that give information, offer webinars to participate in and other programs if you are interested. The Illinois state newsletter “*The Interpreter*” is available on the state web site.

National website: <https://www.churchwomenunited.net/>

Illinois State website: <https://www.churchwomenunitedillinois.org/>

Angella Lewis serves as our West Regional Coordinator and is developing strong relationships with the local units and the State Board. Thank you Angella for volunteering to serve in this capacity.

Viola Lewis is on the Illinois State CWU Board and is seeking nominations for several Board positions. Currently open positions include Secretary, Spirit Light (devotion) and Treasurer Assistance. If you have interest in another area please let Viola know. Most positions are for two years. CWU State Nominations VL6511@MSN.-Com

Ecumenical Action Reports CWUPA has several outreach ministries that we serve and support throughout the year. Here are some updates of activities from Prison Ministry, Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center Adopt-a-School Partner and Snack Pack (Collaboration between School, Church and Community.)

Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center

The Little Free Pantry at Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center



The “Little Free Pantry” at Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center is constantly in use and family size meals could be helpful along with some boxes of cereal for the family. Individually packaged items are always welcome also. It is obvious we could not possibly give more than they can use. All items placed on the table are immediately taken by someone. Thank you for caring about our fellow Peorians who are hungry. Blessings for the food you share! Donations can be taken directly to the school from 8:30-3:30, 800 W Romeo Garrett Ave., 61605 or to Glen Oak Christian Church, 1115 E Republic, 61603 on Monday-Thursday from 9:00-12:00 noon. Submitted by Doris Weyeneth



On **Monday, February 26**, we have 16 people signed up at this point for Read Across America, which is very “doable” however, more could still be included if any would like to join us! It’s a fun event and appears to be enjoyable for students, teachers and volunteers. Win, Win, Win! Just give me a call (309-691-2451) you’d like to be included. Submitted by Doris Weyeneth





Viola Lewis reports that she has made several contacts to the "Moms and Babies" unit at the Decatur Correctional Facility but she has not been able to connect with the coordinator. Although several CWU members have completed the process to visit the facility there are no current plans.



Barb Gurtler again participated in the Gimme Shelter 2024 event by sleeping outside on Friday night, February 16-17 through the snow and cold. Barb is pictured here with the Phoenix staff. Barb was fifth in money raised! Congratulations Barb! Here is an update from Barb, "Briefly, I learned that young people being homeless is rapidly on the rise. Some of that is because of attitudes about LGBTQI+. They are getting kicked out of their homes, it is hard for them to get jobs, and some have been in foster care and have "aged out". The other point that was stressed is that those people standing on corners or elsewhere are real human beings with needs and feelings, and if you don't give them anything, give them a smile, a hello, "see them" and let them know they matter. We heard what a day is like from staff; we heard from people who have moved from the street, and why they were there, into permanent housing. I am thankful for being on the side of being able to help. Thank you all who donated."

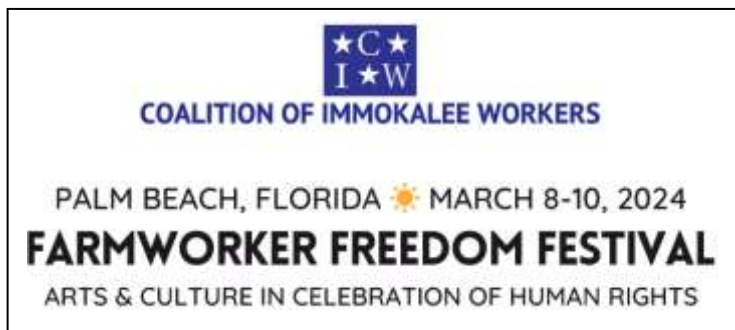


The Church Women United Illinois State Assembly

will be held at the Doubletree by Hilton Chicago-Alsip, Illinois 5000 West 127th Street Alsip, Illinois 60803, Telephone Number 708-371-7300, on Friday April 19-Saturday, April 20, 2024. Registration form is available on line at



https://www.churchwomenunitedillinois.org/uploads/2/4/8/4/24843118/church_women_united_illinois_registration_form_2024.pdf



So what is Farmworker Freedom? What does it mean to forage the path from modern-day slavery to liberation for the women and men who harvest our food? It started in the tomato fields of Florida when the enforceable, worker-driven protections for harvesters were created. Then expanding those proven protections over the next decade to 10 states and 3 countries harvesting over a dozen crops. The Fair Food Program has grown exponentially just in the last several months. There are thousands of more workers poised to be covered on 30 new farms in 15 new states in the coming year.

That is why there is, for the first time, a big celebration going to take place in Palm Beach, Florida. March 8 – 10. They are celebrating Human Rights as shown in Arts and Culture. But don't be lulled to sleep, the campaign for Fair Food continues, and part of the big celebration is to urge Wendy's, Kroger and other big produce buyers to finally join the Fair Food Program that gives freedom, dignity and protection to thousands of farm workers.

This Celebration does cost a great deal for shirts, buses, food, water etc. to show the world that dignity and respect and decent living conditions are possible under the protection of The Fair Food Program. If you would like to contribute to this event, you can mail a check to Coalition of Immokalee Workers, 110 S. 2nd Street, Immokalee, FL 34142. Submitted by Barb Gurtler

Environmental Issues #8



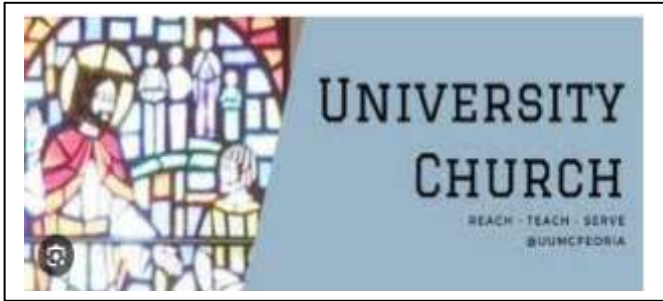
For your consideration:

In the United States, there are 20 million school children who ride buses to school, and this includes both rural and urban schools. As of September 2023, 90% of those buses run on diesel.

That is a problem for those communities, because diesel exhaust contributes to the carbon dioxide pollution that is warming the planet. In addition, diesel exhaust is a known carcinogen, so it is not only adding pollution, but it is also a health risk. Studies show that diesel exhaust creates physical health issues, including asthma, and can even impact cognitive development.

Since electric buses do not have any tailpipe emissions, they do not pollute the environment like buses that run on diesel fuel. The problem for school districts is that electric buses are three times more expensive as diesel buses. To help solve that problem, the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has awarded over \$900 million dollars to school districts to purchase electric buses. These awards seek to target rural, and poor urban areas.

The Peoria Public School District is receiving \$6 million through this program, called the Clean School Bus Program, and will purchase 15 new electric buses. The award will also pay for the infrastructure to charge the vehicles. Not only will there be less pollution and less health risk, but the school district will save money on gas and maintenance. Seems like a real win for the environment. Submitted by Pearl Witte



On Sunday, Feb. 4th, University United Methodist Church took the Sunday Noon meal to Neighborhood House. UUMC had been a part of this mission for many years. We are currently one of 11 churches and civic organizations that participate. We prepare the meal at the church, take it to Neighborhood House and serve the meal from 12 to 1. On this Sunday, we served chicken

and noodles, peaches, rolls and brownies to those in need on the south side of Peoria.



Glen Oak Christian Church hosts a Monthly Community Meal on the first Thursday of the month from 5:00-6:30 at 1115 E. Republic, 61603. Please join us for a free meal on **Thursday, March 7**. All are welcome! Menu will include mashed potatoes, meatballs and gravy, vegetable, fruit, dessert and drinks.



Viola Lewis shared information about a Community Group that provides programming for seniors, Graceland Center Programs. They meet every Wednesday 10:00 AM -1:00 PM at the Life Together Center, 3625 N. Sheridan Road, Peoria 61604 which is at the corner of War Memorial and Sheridan. Upcoming programs include Chair Yoga and BINGO, 2/28/2024; Herb Gardening “Always Continue to Grow” 3/6/2024; CPR: Hands on CPR 3/13/2024; Hospice/Palliative Care 3/20/2024; Chair Yoga and BINGO 3/27/2024.



<https://www.gracelandcenter.com/>

**The April General Membership Meeting of CWU-PA will focus on this program and the offerings!!
April 5 at Salem Lutheran Church, 9:00 AM.**

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81229416360?pwd=Ly9mWIRzS2lQRjhRT2ZsUFNHk3Y3Zz09>

Church Women United Peoria Area 2023 Highlights



Church Women United –Peoria Area has concluded another successful, service oriented and faith led year.

We have hosted monthly meetings every month except for the summer months of June, July, and August.

All the meetings and celebrations were held both in person at various churches in the Peoria area and through the ZOOM link which has been provided by the Illinois State and National CWU and technical expertise of Turance Cobb. As listed in the report our attendance has stayed steady.

In 2023 we received a mayoral proclamation for World Day of Prayer. Celebration which was held on Friday, March 2. This coming year 2024, our celebration has been scheduled for Saturday morning, March 2 at 10:00 AM in hopes of being more inclusive to women who are not able to attend on Friday mornings at

our traditional meeting time of 9:00 AM, The celebration will also be available on the ZOOM.

CWU-PA priorities

Throughout the year CWU-PA participated in outreach events connecting with several local schools.

In February several members read to preschool children at Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education Center. Because there are two campuses, our members divided their time and read books to the children as selected by the school librarian. Valeska Hinton Early Childhood Education is CWU-PA's Adopt a school partner so volunteering in the school setting is a priority.



Each month members provide nonperishable food for the families at the Little Free Pantry. In an effort to balance the available food CWU-PA has designated \$50 each month for additional food to enhance the donations.

In October members were able to welcome grandparents to Grandparent Week as they

visited their students in the classrooms. CWU members greeted guests, directed them to classrooms and shared hands on crafts for the participants.

During the fall festival (pre Halloween celebration) members hosted tables for trick or treaters in a child friendly environment.



2023 World Day of Prayer at Salem Lutheran Church





Pleasant Valley Elementary and Middle School benefitted from CWU-PA involvement with their students and faculty. In February each classroom teacher was able to identify special needs and the items were purchased both by members and through a grant from the Illinois State CWU.

In the spring a theatrical production of Beauty and the Beast received financial support plus many in-kind gifts for sets and props.

Before the Christmas holiday, a collection of hats, mittens and scarfs were given to studnets at Pleasant Hill

Elementary, another Peoria County School.



CWU-PA continued support of the **Prison Ministries** through **Moms and Babies** at the Decatur Correctional Center. Through Illinois State CWU items were purchased and delivered as requested by the facility staff.

Our CWU-PA Prison Ministry delegate, Viola Lewis has participated in the Bible Study presentation pre-COVID and is anxiously awaiting returning when they again allow outsiders in the facility. Prayer requests continue to be share with incarcerated individuals as approved.



The CWU-PA unit hosted the West Central Illinois Institute in the fall. There were 2 guests present, State President Elaine Bailey Johnson, and the former West Area Coordinator, Mazell Taylor from Springfield besides our own Peoria Area members. The program was very well presented by Angella Lewis and well received sharing of mission, priorities, goals and how to achieve better outcomes from our units. We were honored to have President Johnson drive all the way from Chicago to be with us. Angella highlighted the fact that many are working tirelessly to keep momentum going for CWU but

the world has changed in the past several years and we are all challenged to be more creative, innovative and flexible to accomplish the goals we set.

Community Involvement

Three of our members participated in the annual **“Gimme Shelter”** in February where they spend the night outside in a cardboard box to witness to the life of those who are homeless in our community. CWU members support these three women both with financial gifts and prayers as they raise funds to support the community agencies serving the homeless.

Four of our member received recognition both at our local unit meetings and throughout the community. Each of these awards highlighted the importance of Church Women United as a collaborative effort to serve others throughout the community.





At the CWU Illinois State Assembly, **Patti Polk and Kathy Cobb** were both recognized. Patti Polk for her many years of leadership at the local, state and national levels. Kathy Cobb for her dedication to keep members connected and informed of CWU activities, events and goals during the COVID pandemic and efforts to reconnect members through the Information sheet and Zoom options,



Patti Polk was recognized at the Illinois Central College Annual Scholarship Dinner for her continued support of the community college and the many efforts she has spearheaded over the past many years. Church Women United has been a sponsor of the scholarship dinner as well as establishing an endowed scholarship in the name of Church Women United. All were made possible by Patti's leadership and constant dedication.

Barbara Gurtler received a prestigious award for her philanthropic efforts in the Peoria county and Central Illinois. "The Community Foundation of Central Illinois (CFCI) established the Founders Award to recognize those organizations, corporations and individuals who have greatly contributed to CFCI success. The 2023 Founders Award recipient was Barbara Gurtler of Peoria, IL." Pictured here with Barb is Mark Roberts, CEO for the Central Illinois Community Foundation.

Barbara Gurtler, was also honored with the Outstanding Philanthropist award at the 39th Annual National Philanthropy Day Awards Luncheon hosted by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Central Illinois Chapter on November 16, 2023.



Kathy Cobb received the Hero Award of the Month at the Peoria Public Schools Foundation 365

Breakfast that recognized her coordination of the Glen Oak Christian Church Snack Pack Ministry - A Collaboration between church, school and the community. The snack pack program shares 1800 weekly snack packs to local school students and their families involving 30-35 senior volunteers who prepare the Snack Packs each week. The local CWU membership has 10 volunteers each week participating. Two other churches (University United Methodist and First English Lutheran) do similar snack pack

distributions and CWU-PA members organized their local church ministries and facilitate the food distribution each week to over 240 students at three schools in Peoria. CWU-PA was one of the first community collaborators and provides volunteers and financial support of all three ministries. Pictured with Kathy is Cheryl Sanfilip, member of the Peoria Public School Foundation Board and former school administrator in Peoria Public Schools.

Doris Weyeneth was recognized by the Peoria Area CWU for her leadership over the past several years through the COVID epidemic and her continued efforts to keep members informed, involved and engaged in CWU-PA activities, meetings and celebrations. Doris has completed her terms as president but continues to be the Communication and Publicity chair to reach out to both current and potential members. She has also gained state recognition for her dedication and commitment to CWU.



Church Women United Peoria Area October 2023 Information Sheet



The importance of communication was a priority including the monthly Information Sheet which was distributed both electronically and through the mail for those who did not have computer access to receive the Information Sheet which was distributed through email. Hard copies were available at the monthly meetings. Articles included highlights of previous meetings, introductions for future programs, ministry updates, and ecumenical action reports from Farmer Workers, Adopt-A-School Partner, Prison Ministries, Weekend Snack Packs and a monthly article about Environmental Issues.

The monthly info sheet can be sent directly to any local, state or national members interested in receiving it directly through email. It is also posted on the state web site.

Please contact Doris Weyeneth to be placed on the monthly mailing list. weyenethdoris@gmail.com



**Spread the Love at
Pleasant Valley Schools on
Valentine's Day 2023**

