



Disciples Justice Action Network

Call to Justice

Christmas 2020



This is the time of year when some of the best food ever will be cooked, served and eaten. My family knows that during this season, I will cook and serve green, leafy vegetables known as, well, greens (following pandemic guidelines, of course)!

My friends make fun of me because, according to them, I buy seemingly “sanitized” greens, pre-washed, cut, and ready for cooking. You see, they pride themselves on taking the “culinary high road” of picking, washing, and cutting their own greens. They remind me that trustworthy preparation involves taking time to hold each green leaf under running water while unfolding each layer of the leaf, so that hidden grime can be exposed and washed away. Only when this “gunk” has been washed away can you safely cook and serve reliable greens.

Without a doubt, we hope that Christmas 2020 will be a commercial success that improves the COVID-ravaged economy; and, of course, we want it to offer the emotional shot-in-the-arm that, admittedly, we all need. However, we know that Christmas is, and must be, much more than this. We know that the Christ-child offers life-changing love, policy-transforming justice, and the achievable promise of a beloved community where everybody is loved, anybody is honored, and nobody is trivialized.

Yet, if we are to fully receive the Christ-child, some societal cleansing must occur. We must allow the waters of love-infused accountability to unfold, expose, and cleanse the multiple layers of systemic oppression, structural racism, institutional violence, and other kinds of grime that collectively serve as a public health crisis across the land.

Then, with open hearts and minds, let people from every city and every county, every town and every borough, emerge from the dark tunnels of despair, and the slippery hills of hopelessness, and sing with expectancy, urgency, and joy the words from the great Isaac Watts Christmas hymn, retrofitted for our times:

***He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love***

Amen

The Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr.
Executive Director, The Ohio Council of Churches
Co-President, Disciples Action Justice Network



*Joseph Mulamba-Mandangi
Nativity*

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! – Isaiah 58:1

As a faith organization DJAN worked hard this year to ensure a fair election where everyone could have their voice heard. Being a part of the electoral process, especially amidst the coronavirus pandemic, is one of the most powerful ways to live out the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. To this end, along with Disciples Center for Public Witness, we launched the campaign **Faithful Decision 2020**. Our aim was to educate and inspire on how to engage with electoral process faithfully. The campaign provided resources on voter registration, rights, protection, and scripture-based issue guides to help make informed voting choices.

Faithful Decision

The political discourse is often divisive which discourages many Christians from fully participating in the political process. As part of Faithful Decision 2020, DJAN sought to show that voting and other political activism is away to organize our communities to pursue a more just and equitable world that reflects our faith values.

DJAN also focused efforts on voter protection because voting is fundamental right in our democracy. With the marginalized communities we seek to lift up, particularly those of color, being hit hardest by voter suppression, it was imperative for people to know how to register, their voting rights and how to ensure their vote was counted.

These efforts were especially important because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This election was not like any we have seen before, with high stakes and unprecedented numbers of mail-in voting. Voter mobilization may not have looked the same but it was even more important to our efforts at DJAN.



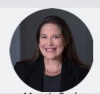
Live Faith Leaders Panel

On Voter Suppression in 2020

Thursday, August 20th
1-2:15 pm ET



Dr. Alvin O'Neal Jackson
President of DC4PW & leader in the
Poor People's Campaign



Maggie Bush,
Programs & Outreach
Director LWV



Moderated By:
Sr. Simone Campbell, SSS E.D.
NETWORK Lobby



Giovanna Oaxaca,
Election Specialist
Faithful Democracy



Rev. Dr. Eric Brown,
Co-Founder "We Believe
Ohio"



Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr.
E.D. Ohio Council of Churches
& President DJAN



During Faithful Decision 2020 DJAN hosted an interfaith panel on voter suppression and protection moderated by Sr. Simone Campbell of Network (Nuns on the Bus). Generation after generation have fought for the right to vote in this country. It is part of our Christian responsibility to uphold that work and never has that been more important than in this 2020 election when roadblock after roadblock were placed in voters' way. With over 1000 views on our pages and many more on our partners', this Facebook live panel was an excellent way to connect with our whole network of activists.

DJAN's own President Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan Jr. spoke, as did DC4PW President, Dr. Alvin O'Neal Jackson.



Remembering Adelle Lemon

(February 1, 1928 – March 7, 2020)

DJAN joins many others in fondly remembering Adelle Lemon, celebrating her strong commitment to justice, and remaining grateful for her incredible generosity.

Adelle Ringstrom Lemon was born and raised in Seattle, Washington. Raised as a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), she traveled at 18 years of age to Europe just after WWII for an international church youth conference. Seeing firsthand the ravages of war contributed to Adelle's lifelong commitment to live frugally, give generously, and work to improve the world.

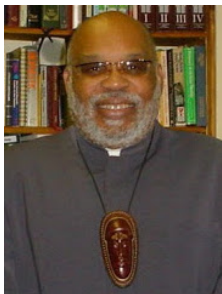
Adelle married Robert Lemon, a Disciples of Christ minister, in 1950. They had four children: David, Nancy, Mary, and Jennifer (previously known as John). In 1961 the family moved to the San Francisco Bay Area so Robert could study for a Doctorate of Theology at Pacific School of Religion. In Berkeley, Adelle used her time, talents, and treasure to support and organize programs for the American Red Cross, and to develop a psychiatric half-way house known as the Creative Learning Center.

She and Robert had a deep faith in God. In addition to Mira Vista United Church of Christ, she was a member of Berkeley Richmond Intercity Ministry (BRIM), her weekly house church with which she met beginning in the late 1960s.

Adelle was a feminist and believed strongly in justice, peace, equality, diversity, and inclusion. She was active in the civil rights movement, worked with the Black Panthers in Richmond, protested against the Vietnam War, marched for farmworkers' rights, demonstrated with Occupy Oakland, and was a strong champion of LGBTQ+ equality. She also generously supported many justice organizations and causes, including **DJAN**. In fact, Adelle and Robert were good friends with two of DJAN's main founders, Harvey and May Lord.

After her beloved Robert died, Adelle continued to live with her daughter and son in law and their son. In 2015 she moved to assisted living, where she spent her last years. She died peacefully in her sleep, out of pain, in hospice care, after a long and full life.

She is survived by her four children, five grandchildren, her great-grandson, many nieces and nephews, the spouses of her children and grandchildren, a large number of good friends, and many grateful recipients of her generosity. For a video interview with Adelle about progressive values, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVu73FtbDvg>



*James Demus III,
DJAN co-founder*

Consider a gift to the Legacy Fund

The DJAN Legacy Fund encourages and educates DJAN members about the opportunity, out of gratitude to our God, to give end-of-life or later-in-life gifts that will continue to give in perpetuity to support DJAN's mission and ministry. The stream of income from our Legacy Fund supports our current justice ministry among Disciples and makes possible an expansion of our justice work beyond what is possible through the annual budget. If you are interested and able please contact us at info@disciplesjustice.net or call 410-212-7964.



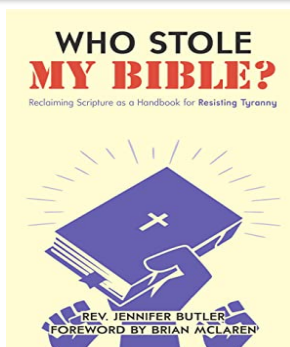
*Harvey & May Lord
DJAN co-founders*

What's Next?

While the latter half of 2020 has been focused on the election, it is time to shift our efforts to 2021! With the Biden-Harris Administration and a new Congress coming in January we must gear up for a concerted advocacy effort on our core justice issues.

Our Long-term Priorities:

- Ending systemic racism
- Eradication of poverty
- Creation Care/Ecological Justice, environmental racism
- Criminal Justice Reform
- Immigration reform
- Worker justice
- Redirection of military-industrial-technology complex funding
- Full equality for LGBTQ+ persons
- Reproductive Justice
- Better relations with Latin America
- An end to the oppression of the Palestinian people.
- Justice for Indigenous Peoples.
- Healthcare as a human right



Looking for some inspiration? Read Faith in Public Life's founding Executive Director Rev. Jennifer Butler's book *Who Stole My Bible* which powerfully shows how God has equipped us with the tools to resist tyranny and fight for equality in these difficult times. A motivating read and great resource for scripture-based justice work. More info:

Faithinpubliclife.org/whostolemybible/

DJAN 2021 First Quarter Priorities:

Coronavirus Recovery:

- A comprehensive relief package which includes extended unemployment, housing security, small business aid, ensuring local essential services, and testing expansion
- A fair rollout of all Vaccines
- Support for communities of color hit hard by COVID-19
- Protection of the Affordable Care Act and expansion of those insured
- Long term economic recovery plan which places workers, marginalized community development, and climate justice at the forefront

Immigration:

- Rollback of the current administration's destructive policies such as family separation and Muslim ban
- A fair and humane asylum system
- Expansion of refugees welcomed into the U.S.

Poor People's Campaign

- Participate in both digital and local organizing

Ecumenical Advocacy Days

- 'Imagine! God's Earth and People's Restored' virtual gathering focused on climate justice and environmental racism takes place April 18th-21st 2021

As always DJAN will be working with our partners on a broad range of issues and be ready to respond to current events as needed. Make sure to stay tuned for all updates!

Visit our website at disciplesjustice.net

Visit and like us on Facebook facebook.com/DisciplesJAN

Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/DisciplesJAN

An Unprecedented Christmas



During this past year, we've almost worn out the "unprecedented" word until it has little or no meaning. And yet, we all know that that this word certainly applies to the birth of Jesus—*something that was truly unprecedented.*

2020 brought us a once-per-century pandemic and a genuine challenge to our Republic, yet those dangers aren't unprecedented...because they've both occurred before. God gifting his Son, the Prince of Peace and Justice, is the one unprecedented event we can point to as the example of how we are to respond to the chaos of current events.

I support DJAN because it provides that example and it aims its energy and resources directly into the stated mission of Jesus - defense of the "lowly and fatherless" and the rendering of "justice to the afflicted and needy."

The current situation calls for changes in the ways we do things, including fundraising. For example, I've found that social media is a ready example of how we can all help DJAN continue its mission and ministry. Even though I've been on Facebook for 11 years, I am still learning things every day about how this means of communication works—for both good and bad.

This past October as my birthday approached, Facebook suggested a facility to share my favorite fundraiser with friends and family. I followed the simple directions and realized DJAN was in the list of fundraising options I could select to support.

As I followed the directions and completed the forms, I shared my heart about why I thought DJAN is so crucial in today's polarized society. And, when I posted my Birthday request for DJAN donations, I was pleasantly surprised to discover there were Social Justice advocates in my list of friends I didn't even realize were there. How wonderful!

I encourage everyone who uses any social media platform to read and learn about how you can use those platforms to amplify your voice and support DJAN's mission to "speak for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all the unfortunate...the poor and needy."

**Set up a Facebook fundraiser today!
And/Or Donate directly:**

Online:

www.djan.net/support.htm

or

mail your contribution to

DJAN

PO Box 35887

Tulsa, OK 74153

Even though we're all cautiously hopeful about new political leadership, we also know that we must continue opposing institutional racism, including tone-deaf—and deadly— forms of law enforcement, as well as the "normalization" of hate in our local and national political discourse. Hate has been encouraged in our digital "town squares and halls," and we must meet it head-on where it resides—online and with the love of Jesus Christ.

As Christmas engenders our nostalgia as well as our hope and generosity, let us also remember that NOW is the time to reach out to our friends and family for help to promote DJAN's ministry of social justice, using the same communication tools we're using to navigate these "unprecedented times."

By Scott Kinnaird, Executive Team Officer, DJAN Decisions Team
For help with Facebook fundraising, contact djan@verizon.net

From Our Director

The signs of the times: A large number of deaths due to COVID-19, poverty, and ongoing institutional racism; crucial elections for the U.S. Presidency and the U.S. Senate; economic dislocations and the suffering that comes with it; children taken away from their parents at the southern border of the U.S.; and, as of the writing of this article, a dangerous and divisive demagogue who continues to undermine democracy by refusing to concede an election he obviously lost. All of these things have made 2020 an extremely challenging year.

But there are also signs of hope: More and more people are affirming, supporting, and/or participating in events sponsored by Black Lives Matter. The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival has been holding successful virtual, physical, and hybrid events featuring impacted persons who have come together to fight poverty, racism, environmental degradation, militarism, and Christian nationalism. A woman of African American and Asian American descent, a child of immigrants, is now our Vice-President elect. The cradle of the South may send to the U.S. Senate both the descendant of Hebrew slaves and the descendant of African slaves. And the President-elect is talking about and planning to do something to address the deadly power of three pandemics: COVID-19, poverty, and institutional racism.



And so, during this holiday season, serious talk of progressive change is in the air. But to make sure that it does not stay up in the air, DJAN and other prophetic voices must come together, work together, and together demand the change that this moment presents to us.

But to do that effectively, we need your help: we need your prayers, we need your active involvement, and, yes, we need your continuing financial support.

With your help, we will continue to promote greater justice, peace, equity, diversity, inclusion, and care for creation in both church and society. Together we can make progress in building the Beloved Community envisioned by Dr. King, make the arc of the universe bend a little more towards justice, and move closer to the reign of God proclaimed by the One whose birth we celebrate during this Christmas season.



**Blessings,
Ken Brooker Langston**

Keep in Touch!

Donate: www.djan.net/support.htm

Website: www.disciplesjustice.net

Facebook: www.facebook.com/DisciplesJAN

Twitter: @DisciplesJAN

