

## **Introducing the 2011 Water Justice Initiative: Filling Up Our Social Justice Cup**

A strong thirst for social justice is unmistakable at MCC NOVA, as evidenced by our mission statement, which emphasizes social action, and by the vibrancy and energy of the Micah Ministries (think AIDS Walk, outreach to the homeless, service trip to Costa Rica). Even so, we know we can do more both as individuals and as a congregation. The question is, how?

One answer is to focus on a specific justice issue that can augment our social action programs while unifying our efforts and thereby multiply our results. The question is, which issue can unite us and have the kind of impact for which we thirst?

The answer is, aptly enough, water.

As vital as water is to life, many cannot take it for granted. Today, 884 million people lack access to safe water supplies. By 2025, it is estimated that 48 nations, with combined populations of 2.8 billion, will face freshwater “stress” or “scarcity.”

Significantly, the water crisis is an issue of access as well as supply. Consider this: A citizen of the U.S. taking a five minute shower uses more water than a typical person in a developing country slum uses in a whole day. Millions of women and children spend hours a day collecting water from distant, often polluted sources.

This tension between a fundamental human need and an imperiled natural resource makes water one of the most compelling issues on the planet—and a fitting nexus for our congregation’s social justice activities.

MCC NOVA will use water issues to focus our reflections and help guide our justice ministries in 2011. Beginning in January, we will explore what we can do as individuals, as a congregation, and as global citizens to help ensure that everyone has the water they need to sustain and nourish their bodies and spirits. Each month, a specific aspect of Water Justice will be highlighted, with an emphasis on action (e.g., Greening Our Church, Individual Water Conservation Awareness, Children’s Well Project, Potomac Cleanup River Cleanup Day, International Water Service Project). Fun youth education activities will also be organized around water-related themes.

You can help to make 2011 the year when MCC NOVA advances the prophetic vision of “letting justice flow like a river, and righteousness like an unfailing stream” by expanding on the ideas that interest you, suggesting new ones, and, working with others to turn them into tangible actions.

The table is set and your cup is ready to be filled. Enjoy and drink up!