



Alabama-West Florida Conference United Women in Faith

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2022 Conference Officers

President	Debbie Bracewell
Vice President	Katy Wrona
Secretary	Debbie Bell
Treasurer	Cynthia Brown
Communications	Laurel Akin
Nominations	Desiree Clark

Mission Coordinators

Spiritual Growth	Zan Jones
Social Action	Ora Gillespie
MN&O	Kristine Jones
Ed. & Interp.	Joyce Genz
Webmaster	Anne Capps
Parliamentarian	Joyce Genz
SEJ Chair of Nom.	Barbara Carroll
Nat. Board of Dir.	Betty Helms

A Message from the President

I noted in last year's end-of-year Alert that 2021 had been a year of great change. Little did I know what awaited us this year! We have a new name, new logo, new membership categories, etc. The two notable items that have not changed are our 150+ years of service to our members and to our missional groups. In the November/December response magazine, Harriett Jane Olson discusses how we wrap Advent and Christmas within our family and church traditions. Some of us continue age old traditions, and some of us begin new traditions. As Olson says, "Traditions are part of our celebrations and observances as United Women in Faith too. Some will change due to circumstances out of our control." She encourages us to create new traditions, accepting change to embrace hope and faith and action in new ways.

This is a challenge for us in 2023. How do we maintain and grow our membership and service? I am already seeing positive changes as members rise to serve as leaders, as districts reach out to include those who wish to continue as members of United Women in Faith.

We have new experiences awaiting us in 2023, new ways to refresh our spirits and transform our communities. As National Vice-President Cynthia Rives says, "There's no holding us back when we know God is leading us forward in mission with Christ!"

Blessings,

Debbie Bracewell, President
AWF-UWFaith



Conference President End of Year Report

Debbie Bracewell December 8, 2022

Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” John 20:21 Change has been the theme of 2022. Beginning with an Executive Team meeting via Zoom in January, our conference saw the merging of districts with Dothan District merging with Marianna-Panama City and Demopolis District splitting between Mobile (renamed Southwest District) and Montgomery District. Change can be confusing, but our scripture’s reference to Jesus “sending us” reminds us of our goal to serve.

The AWF-UMW Conference Annual Day held at Marianna First UMC was a great celebration with Bishop Graves and Reverend Ashley Davis providing words of hope and joy. As February ended, we were given details about the rebranding of United Methodist Women and the introduction of our new brand—United Women in Faith. Assembly 2022, held in Orlando, FL, was well attended by our conference and many still talk about the workshops, worship, and gatherings.

Mission u was held in July at Aldersgate UMC (Montgomery) with UMCOR health kits prepared and a Civil Rights tour of the city. Change continued as Mission u introduced one study prepared for adults, youth, and children. Bearing Witness in the Kingdom was a study of parables from the book of Luke. The Conference Executive Team met in Enterprise where budgets for 2023 and a slate of officers were approved.

Our last conference event was our Spiritual Enrichment Retreat held at Blue Lake. Our guest speaker was Reverend Kristen Wright. Attendance was high, new conference officers were elected and installed, and workshops were powerful. New officers installed by Betty Helms were Deannie DeFelix, Communications; Joyce Genz, Social Action; Carolyn McInnis, Class of 2026 Committee on Nominations; Charter for Racial Justice Cynthia Jackson and Laurel Akin.

Throughout the year, we used Zoom for conference committee meetings, national UWFaith meetings, and district president meetings. I serve on the AWF-UMC Conference CORE Team and the Conference Board of Laity. Actively serving on these committees gives me an insight into how our church conference works and why procedures are handled the way they are.

We have lost members this year through disaffiliation and death. Our prayers are with those families and those individuals. I thank our membership for their willingness to move forward, to accept changes and willingly continue to move forward. Your encouragement and continued attendance, virtual or live, keeps our Executive Team motivated and determined to fulfill our Purpose. I am also grateful for the hardworking members of the Conference Executive Team! Their support and willingness to walk in faith is a blessing to us all.

Debbie Bracewell

President, AWF-United Women in Faith

From the Vice-President

Hello friends!

We have come to the end of 2022. I hope this year's journey centered in peace has brought a little peace to your life. The 2022 theme scripture verse found in John 20:21 gives us both reassurance of peace and the call to go out and serve as Jesus did.

“Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”
John 20:21 (NIV)

If you are like me, sometimes the stress and work of the mission can take a front seat to the peace that comes with serving our Lord. This fall has been a busy time of year with our Amazing Spiritual Enrichment Retreat but also the opportunity to be part of the Soul Care pilot training program. I am honored to be part of this new journey with Zan Jones. But at the same time, I feel the added stress of learning something new.

It is in this Advent season, where I am reminded most of God's peace and love for each one of us. I remember to take a breath and work through my work at a steadier pace. I remember I am not alone in my journey and that I have a sisterhood of women working together. I find comfort and joy in my relationship with God and in his creation.

As we get closer to Christmas, I am praying for peace for each of you in whichever and wherever you need it most.

Peace Be With You,

*Katy Wrona,
AWF-UMW Vice President*



Annual Day March 24-25

Annual Day 2023 will be in Mobile. You won't want to miss our speaker, United Women in Faith National President 'Ainise 'Isama'u! Mark your calendar and look for more information and a registration form in your inbox or on our website awf-umw.org in a few weeks!

Spiritual Growth

United Women in Faith, we're approaching the end of another year. So much has gone on in this year for us. We got a new name, under a new brand and we're moving forward to expand our sisterhood.

We continue to work to expand your spiritual growth. As your conference Spiritual Growth Coordinator, I have had Zoom monthly devotionals. It has been a time of rejoicing through music and devotion which I call "Food for Your Soul." Just like our bodies require nutrition from foods, our spirit and soul need nourishment as well. The last devotional for this year was held on December 3, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. Deaconess Laurel Akin led the devotional. I invite you to mark your calendar and consider joining as we begin 2023.

Listed below are the new dates for 2023. Please email me at Mahogany84@hotmail.com if you want the link sent to you. The meeting ID and passcode will be the same for each zoom devotional. I look forward to seeing you.

Scheduled Devotional (Food for Your Soul), Saturdays at 9:00a.m.

January 14, February 4, March 4,, April 8,

I'm happy to announce that the Alabama West Florida Conference United Women in Faith was chosen as one of the pilot conferences to host a Soul Care Retreat for 2023. This is a great honor for our conference. What is Soul Care? "Soul Care events focus on nurturing your mind, body and spirit while deepening your faith through spiritual practice and creating bonds of sisterhood. This event will be a recruiting tool for new members." We will host this event in late June of 2023. More information will be forthcoming as we continue to plan for this event.

As we end 2022, lets us remember the families of our beloved sisters of United Women in Faith that we lost this year. Continue to reach out in support. May God continue to bless each of you as you celebrate the holiday season.

**Yours in Christ,
Zan M. Jones, Spiritual Growth
Coordinator**



Education & Interpretation End-of-Year Report

In order to allow unit leaders to reach a wider audience without having to develop or adapt material, the national staff have been working diligently to provide digital and print Program Resources. I can personally vouch for the quality and ease of using the digital material. In February, my local unit successfully used the virtual Call to Prayer and Self Denial program and the accompanying PowerPoint presentation. Some districts have also experimented with streaming and in-person meetings to expand their reach. Access to appropriate technology is our biggest challenge.

I appreciate the educational opportunities provided by National. This year I have participated in so many educational podcasts and webinars that I've lost count. In May, I attended 2022 Assembly virtually. In addition, I participated in Zoom sessions with the E&I National Staff representative, Jessica Tulloch, in Mission u leadership training, and in some of the Monthly Community Gatherings on Mighty Networks.

I communicated with District E&I Mission Coordinators throughout the year with new information and updates on the Reading Program, Voices of the Field and other resources for transformational learning. I also assisted with the training for Southwest District unit E&I coordinators.

I served on assigned conference committees and served as the AWF-UW Faith Conference Parliamentarian for the Executive Mission Team meetings and business sessions and chair of Standing Rules & Policies. I served on the external Mission u committee and the Board of Global Ministries for the Alabama-West Florida Conference. As an Ex-Officio member of the latter, I evaluated the Renfroe Grant applications, voted on business actions and attended the quarterly meetings as my schedule allowed.

In September, I served as a Mission u co-leader with Cynthia Brown for the virtual Luke 13 study: *Bearing Witness in the Kingdom of God*.

I am grateful for the opportunity to promote the mission of United Women in Faith at all levels of our organization with a dedicated sisterhood who serve women, children and youth around the world with love and grace.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Genz November 29, 2022

faith

action

sisterhood

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS REPORT

For the year 2023 the Nominations Committee was able to fill all but one vacant officer position. **We are still in need of someone to step forward and agree to take the position of Mission Coordinator for Education and Interpretation.** Please be in prayer and consider if God is calling you to fill this position. We are all endowed with different gifts and graces and if the Lord is speaking to you and urging you to answer this call, please contact Desiree Clarke at 251-454-5549 or any of the members of the Committee on Nominations:

Shirley Hodges (Class of 2023) 334-830-0809

Clara Ester (Class of 2024) 251-509-2572

Melda Deverell (Class of 2025) 205-396-5569

Carolyn McInnis (Class of 2026) 334-447-0555

The following members were elected and installed at our Spiritual Enrichment Retreat at Blue Lake in October:

President: Debbie Bracewell

Secretary: Debbie Bell

Communications: Deanie DeFelix

Social Action: Joyce Genz

Committee on Nominations Class of 2026: Carolyn McInnis

Charter for Racial Justice (appointed): Cynthia Jackson and Laurel Akin

Next year the Committee on Nominations will be looking to fill vacancies for 2024. Those offices will be for Vice-President, Treasurer, Membership Nurture & Outreach, Spiritual Growth, Committee on Nominations Chair, and Committee on Nominations Class of 2027.

Please consider joining our conference team so we can continue serving women, children and youth in our own backyards and around the world.

Desiree Clarke,

Chairperson, Committee on Nominations

From the AWF-United Women in Faith Conference Secretary

This Winter and all year long the Secretary duties have kept me busy. When we met for our Annual Spiritual Enrichment Retreat at Blue Lake Assembly Grounds in Andalusia the next term officers were elected and installed. We awarded 3 scholarships to this event to "first timers" and each of them were so appreciative.

The Secretary training for district secretaries was completed in February and again in this month (December) for the newly elected secretaries. All year I have provided articles that included tips and even reminders about being the district/Local Unit secretary.

Thanks to everyone for your encouragement and confidence for me to continue for another 2-year term (2023-2024) as the conference secretary. I look forward to listening, recording, and sharing the mission plans for us.

My most memorable time this year was during the Spiritual Enrichment Retreat. My younger sister, two nieces and a great niece joined me at Blue Lake. Their only question was, "are the rooms air-conditioned?" "Of course," I said. "But you have to bring your own sheets, linens, and such."

Serving Boldy with Grace "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." Galatians 6:9

Many thanks to Elizabeth, Marcie, Carolyn, and Connie; welcome Carol! We need you!

Service and Peace,

Debbie Bell, AWF-UW Faith

Secretary and Scholarship

Committee Chair

mawbel36575@yahoo.com



**ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE
UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH**

REPORT OF THE AWF-UWFAITH TREASURER

For the Year 2022		as of 11/30/22		
MISSION GIVING (PLEDGE)	Pledge	Paid by Districts	Balance	% Paid
Bay Pines	11,000	4,321	6,679	39.3%
Marianna/PC/Dothan	20,500	12,529	7,971	61.1%
Southwest (Mobile)	24,575	7,272	17,303	29.6%
Montgomery	20,675	3,320	17,355	16.1%
Pensacola	20,000	2,901	17,099	14.5%
Events - Offering	2,700	1,087	1,613	40.3%
TOTALS FROM DISTRICTS	99,450	31,429	68,021	31.6%
Pledge to National	84,533	23,632	60,900	28.0%

Treasurer Report for Spiritual Enrichment Retreat

ATTENDED SER 2022 @		Blue Lake October 7 & 8, 2022				
Districts	General	Officers	Guests	Scholarships	Totals	
Bay Pines	1	5			6	
Marianna/PC/Dothan	1	9			10	
Southwest (Mobile)	9	10	1	3	23	
Montgomery		4		1	5	
Pensacola	2	6			8	
	13	34	1	4	52	

Total registration income: \$2,451.00

As we near the end of 2022, we are still receiving donations from local units to the districts and from the districts to the conference. The figures above are not final; we are still getting in pledges as we are closing units and reorganizing districts.

I am appreciative to all district treasurers for their hard work and support to the onference. In 2022 we had five hardworking district treasurers:

Baypines—Susan Morrison

Marianna/PC/Dothan—Peggy Pelt

Southwest—Sally Pehler

Montgomery—Jill Ferris

Pensacola—Margaret Lawson

Cynthia Brown

Treasurer

Alabama-West Florida Conference

UWFaith

2023 Reading Program

The Reading Program is a cherished tradition that brings together members to explore, share and discuss books.

There's something for everyone—the Reading Program is available for:

- Adults, youth, and children
- Enlightening subjects in diverse genres, including:
 - Education for Mission
 - Leadership Development
 - Nurturing for Community
 - Social Action
 - Spiritual Growth

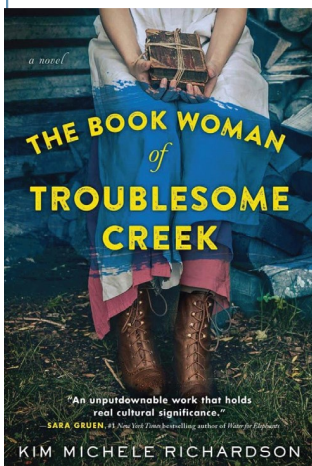
Reading is connecting.

The Reading Program is not meant to be completed alone or in a vacuum. You can enrich the experience by doing one or several of these things:

- **Share the program** with United Women in Faith members and members of the community.
- **Help people attain books.** Distribute this guide.
- **Connect with local and district groups.** Start a book club, download books onto an e-reader to pass around and share, present book reviews at group meetings.
- **Display a progress chart in your church** for all who wish to participate, and post displays to encourage book sales.
- **Pray.** Books often raise concerns about people, countries, and issues. Bring these concerns to God during your prayer time at home and at group meetings.

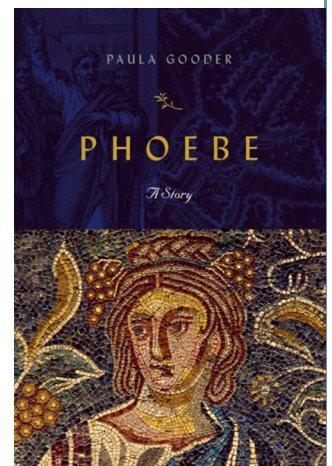
Advocate for tangible change. Many Reading Program books address issues including climate change, mass incarceration and racism. Organize a task force to address these issues in your community.

Learn more and check out the Reading Program books for 2023 and prior years at <https://uwfaith.org/resources/reading-program/>



*It cannot be that the people
should grow in grace unless they
give themselves to reading. A
reading people will be a knowing
people.*

John Wesley



Winter 2022

Spiritual Enrichment Retreat October 2022 at Blue Lake—a special time of spiritual renewal, fellowship and fun!



A record number of first timers!

