

ALERT

Volume 2, Summer 2023

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2023 Conference Officers

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| President | Deb Bracewell |
| Vice President | Katy Wrona |
| Secretary | Debbie Bell |
| Treasurer | Cynthia Brown |
| Communications | Deanie DeFelix |
| Nominations | Desiree Clarke |

Mission Coordinators

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Spiritual Growth | Zan Jones |
| Social Action | Joyce Genz |
| MN&O | Kristine Jones |
| Webmaster | Anne Capps |
| Parliamentarian | Betty Helms |
| SEJ Nom. Chr. | Barbara Carroll |
| Nat. Board of Dir. | Betty Helms |

Message from the President

What a celebration we had in March during our Annual Day at New Hope UMC in Theodore! Including the Bishop and District Superintendents, over 60 attended the 50th celebration of Annual Day. We are slowly regaining our pre-COVID attendance numbers.

The next conference event will be Mission u July 22 at Aldersgate UMC in Montgomery. This year's study, *Living the Kin-dom: Exploring the Lord's Prayer as a Spiritual Practice for Social Transformation*, is a rich guide for how we can live out God's kin-dom in our lives. We will dive deep into the meaning of each line, look at parables, and learn how the Lord's Prayer can help us build a beloved community.

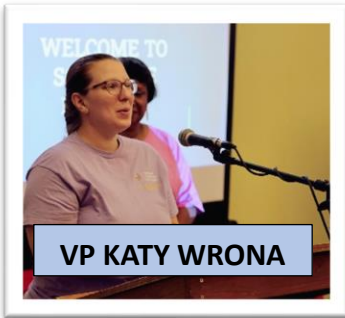
Registration is available online at <https://www.awf-umw.org/>

As we have recently completed a conference vote on disaffiliation, let us reach out to those units or circles who have left the United Methodist Church. Encourage members to continue with their United Women in Faith membership in your groups or in newly formed groups. Share with them the membership options that are available through this link, <https://uwfaith.org/get-involved/>. Regardless of denomination, we are united in purpose—to make a difference, to get involved, and to make a positive impact for women, children, and youth locally, nationally, and globally.

Blessings,

Debbie Bracewell

*"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*



From the Vice-President

SOUL CARE RETREAT A SUCCESS!

See Zan Jones' article for more details and photos of this event.

Soul Care was created in response to hearing an overwhelming desire to be nurtured from women all around the country. The AWF UWFaith was honored to be selected to pilot an in-person Soul Care retreat. We were excited to host an intergenerational soul care retreat with the theme "*Women Walking in Their Purpose.*"

The overarching focus of the weekend was on spiritual release, healing, rest, and power, where we offered space to nourish the body, mind, and soul. There were inspiring speakers, workshops, discussions, and networking, as well as the opportunity to build a sisterhood together.

We had two amazing speakers from United Methodist Clergy in the Baypines District. Rev. Kitsy Dixon from Spanish Fort UMC led us in our message on Friday evening. Rev. Laura Parker from Fairhope UMC led us in a short message and communion on Saturday afternoon. Both faith leaders were powerful in their delivery and really connected to our theme of "*Women Walking in Their Purpose.*"

Our workshops engaged us in many relaxing and educational topics that allowed the entire group some restorative time and the opportunity to learn from one another. We held a fun diamond art activity on Friday night. On Saturday morning we got everyone moving with a prayer walk or interactive zumba. After breakfast, everyone was able to participate in a workshop on essential oils or photography. One of the most relationship building workshops was held on the Holy Spirit. The message and discussion questions bonded the group as each participant was a little vulnerable and shared a part of their story.

Overall, it was a relaxing 24 hours at Beckwith Camp. The camp on the water was the perfect environment to enjoy nature, build new friendships, and spend time with the Lord.



From the Conference Secretary

UW Faith Announces new General Secretary & CEO

May 25, 2023

Contact: Yvette Moore, Director of PR & Marketing, [yyoore@uwfaith.org](mailto:yymoore@uwfaith.org)

NEW YORK, NY—United Women in Faith is pleased to announce the election of Sally Vonner to the position of General Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, effective June 1, 2023. The May 22 board vote culminated a six-month nationwide search.



Sally Vonner

Ms. Vonner joined the organization's national staff in 2010 as Assistant General Secretary of Membership and Leadership Development. With reorganization in 2018, she became the Transformation Officer, coordinating the organization's visioning and strategic development to positively impact the lives of women, children, and youth. She oversaw an organizational rebranding that opened new ways for women to join, introduced program innovations and initiatives, and rolled out United Women in Faith as the new public-facing name.

"Sally is not just a woman who knows this organization but also a visionary who possesses a wealth of knowledge and experience," said 'Ainise 'Isama'u, board president. "She is the kind of leader who understands where we've been, where we are, and where we need to go."

Board Vice President Cynthia Rives said, "Sally's grasp of the current strategic plan will enable her to lead United Women in Faith boldly as we live out our belief that love in action can change the world. Equally important, she brings stability in a time of change as she is well grounded in our organization, knowledgeable of our history, and today's United Women in Faith.

Ms. Vonner is ready for the new challenge.

"My primary focus is to continue and expand the mission and reach of United Women in Faith as we put our love and faith in action to change the world, and work to improve the lives of women, children, and youth around the world," Ms. Vonner said. "I commit to lead with faith and trust in God, the support of the directors, the Program Advisory Group, my colleagues, and most of all, the members of United Women in Faith.

“I look forward to connecting with members, soon to be members, and The United Methodist Church family in the weeks, months, and years to come. Get ready for the awesome future God has for us.”

The Texas native has served The United Methodist Church in several other capacities including women’s retreat leader, and jurisdictional conference delegate and alternate in 2008, 2016, and 2020 representing the North Texas Annual Conference. Ms. Vonner was an organizer for the denomination’s work on immigration assistance, community development initiatives, and dismantling racism work. She was commissioned as a U.S. missionary by the General Board of Global Ministries in 2000 to serve in the North Texas Annual Conference as the Communities of Shalom Coordinator. Ms. Vonner also served as the Associate Director of Connectional Ministries for the North Texas Annual Conference, 2005-2010.

Ms. Vonner serves on the boards of The Wesley campus ministry at her alma mater Texas A&M Commerce and is vice president of the New York Justice For Our Neighbors. She is a longtime member of Black Methodists for Church Renewal at the conference, jurisdiction, and national levels. She is also part of a women’s leadership cohort with J.P. Morgan Chase’s Community Development division, since 2021.

Ms. Vonner is a graduate of Perkins School of Theology with an M.Div. and Women’s Studies Certification and Texas A&M Commerce with a B.S. in Biology.

A longtime member of First United Methodist Church of Grand Prairie, Texas, she regularly attends Teaneck United Methodist Church in New Jersey, where she is a member of the local United Women in Faith group. She is an active member of the Bergen County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. [. . .]

Friends can celebrate Ms. Vonner’s election with a gift to mission at uwfaith.org/give

United Women in Faith connects spiritual women to act boldly for justice and transform communities. It is an agency of The United Methodist Church with a special focus on the needs of women, children, and youth.

Debbie Bell,

AWF-UW Faith Secretary

Scholarship Committee Chair

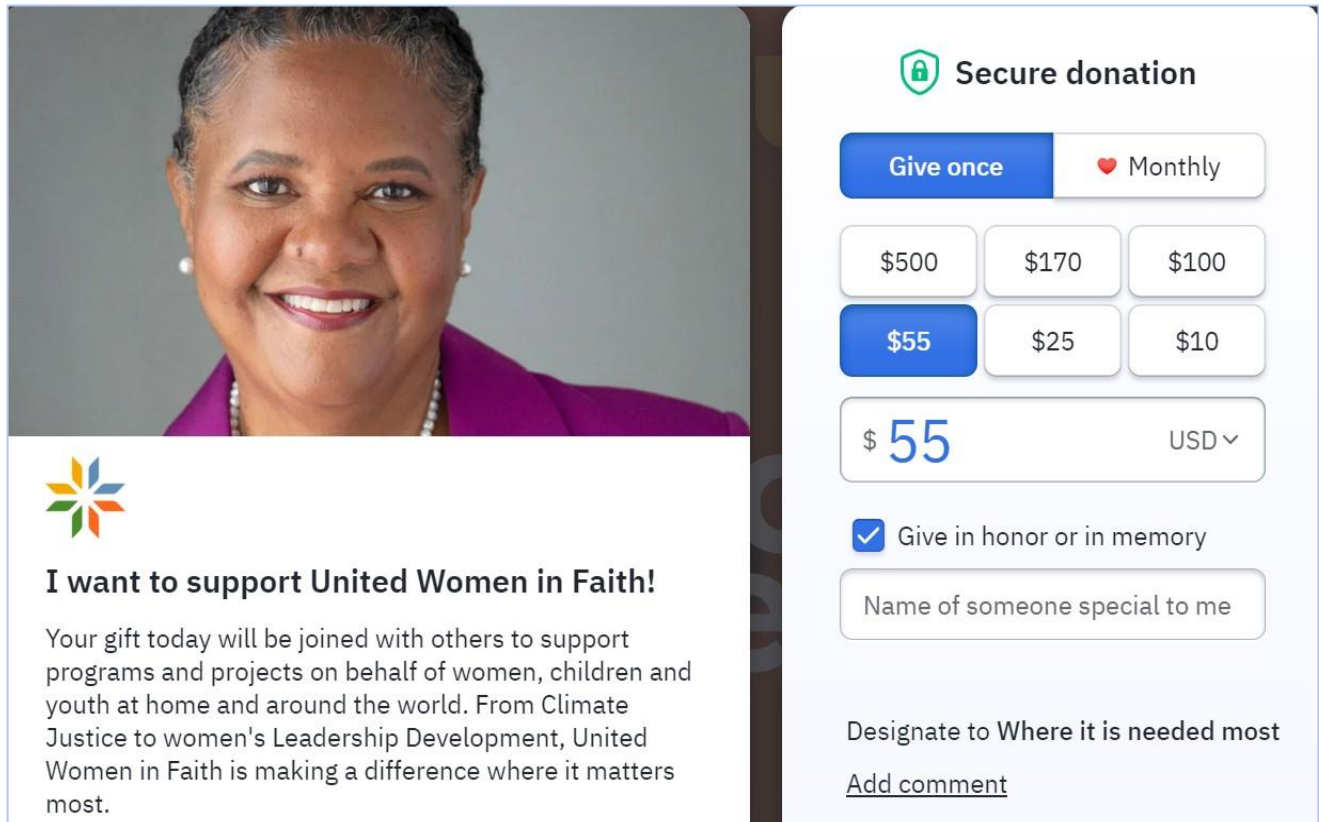
mawbel36575@yahoo.com



FROM THE TREASURER

Greetings United Women in Faith,

Supporting United Women in Faith is really easy online. See this sample screenshot of one of several options for giving provided on our website: uwfaith.org/give/.



I want to support United Women in Faith!

Your gift today will be joined with others to support programs and projects on behalf of women, children and youth at home and around the world. From Climate Justice to women's Leadership Development, United Women in Faith is making a difference where it matters most.

Secure donation

Give once Monthly

\$500 \$170 \$100

\$55 \$25 \$10

\$ 55 USD

Give in honor or in memory

Name of someone special to me

Designate to Where it is needed most

[Add comment](#)

*All of us need to explore this page to find the many ways our giving can make a big difference
in the lives of those who need it most in our world.*

**Conference Treasurer:
Cynthia Brown, 334-202-2469**

Many Local Units have been assigned to New Districts. Please feel free to reach out to your District Treasurer to submit remittance in 2023.

**Mariana/PC/Dothan District Treasurer:
Bonnie Brant, 478-262-5600**

**Southwest District Treasurer:
Sally Pehler, 251-490-4717**

**Central Alabama District Treasurer:
Jill Farris, 334-313-0965**

**Pensacola District Treasurer:
Patricia Franklin, 850 217-7905**

FROM SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Greetings United Women in Faith of the Alabama-West Florida Conference,

Spiritual Growth is defined as, “the process of developing self-identity, nurturing meaningful relationships with others and /or with a higher power, communing with nature, and recognizing transcendence and unity.”

What is “Soul Care”? “The United Women in Faith asked over 24,000 women across The United Methodist Church what was most important to them and what they are seeking. One of the most resounding answers was the need for Soul Care. And so, a new and nourishing event was born.”

“SOUL Care events focus on nurturing your mind, body, and spirit while deepening your faith through spiritual practice and creating bonds of sisterhood.”



The Alabama West Florida Conference of United Women in Faith was blessed last year to receive a grant to help us sponsor our first “Soul Care Retreat.” Our conference was chosen out of all the conferences in the Southeastern Jurisdiction, so this is truly an honor. Katy Wrona Conference Vice-President and Zan Jones Conference Spiritual Growth Coordinator were prepared in a thirteen-week training for this event.

Our Soul Care Retreat was held at the Beckwith Camp and Conference Center in Fairhope, Alabama, on June 2 - 3, 2023. Unlike our Spiritual Growth event scheduled at Blue Lake this October 6 & 7, 2023, we were limited to attendance of only 36. The event was also limited to women ages 30 to 60 years so that we might share our sisterhood with the next generation of upcoming United Women in Faith.



As we looked forward to an exciting, spiritually uplifting event, we prayed that God would bless those attending and the conference members involved in this historical event. Our prayers were gloriously answered, praise God!



The following schedule serves to remind us of the monthly Zoom devotional meetings available for the rest of the year.



FOOD FOR YOUR SOUL

**Zoom devotional
monthly**

July 8 @ 9:00

Aug. 5 @ 9:00

Sept. 9 @ 9:00

Oct. 14 @9:00

Nov. 4 @9:00

Dec. 9 @ 9:00

Email mahogany84

@hotmail.com

for link.

Yours In Christ,
Zan Jones
Conference Spiritual Growth Coordinator

FROM MEMBERSHIP, NURTURE, AND OUTREACH

The Alabama West Florida Conference in Mobile provided inspiration to several United Women in Faith who were blessed to attend. We will be well-represented at General Conference and Southeastern Jurisdiction with some of our UWFaith members elected as delegates or alternates.



United Women in Faith from across the Alabama West Florida Conference gather at the altar as the 2023 Annual Conference in Mobile closes on June 14.

NEW EMAIL FOR MNO CONFERENCE COORDINATOR KRISTINE JONES: KristineUWF@gmail.com



FROM SOCIAL ACTION

Dangerous Prayers and Actions

Some years ago, I prayed that God would provide opportunities for me to serve others in ways that would take me out of my comfort zone. He answered that prayer in multiple ways far beyond my imagination. It wasn't long after my prayer that I was first asked to lead a Mission u study for the Alabama-West Florida Conference. I had attended Mission u and led studies at the unit and district levels but never at the conference level. After my leadership training, I was asked to be a substitute leader in another conference before I even had a chance to facilitate my original assignment. I thought the logistics made it impossible, but in actuality, I was scared of making that leap. I got over my nerves after my first class and the next year, I did accept another conference's call to fill in on short notice. Teaching Mission u with a partner on Zoom was another new challenge that I accepted. I discovered that each time I successfully accepted God's opportunity to serve, a larger challenge was given to stretch my comfort zone.

This spring, I was really stretched in another direction. Part of my Social Action responsibilities is to be educated in the current United Women in Faith justice campaigns, Just Energy 4 All and Interrupt the School-to-Prison Pipeline. I attend nationally sponsored Zoom sessions on both campaigns as much as I can. This spring, conference social action coordinators were offered a scholarship to participate in the virtual Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2023 Conference on April 25-27. In addition to attending sessions, the scholarship required participating in a virtual meeting with a senator. I accepted the scholarship knowing that this would be another stretching challenge out of my comfort zone. I received great one-on-one mentoring from a national executive director for advocacy to prepare for a meeting with Senator Katie Britt's staff. If anyone would like to receive mentoring / training in advocacy, please contact me and I will offer some of my resources.

If we don't advocate for justice for the oppressed, we are supporting the oppressor. Fortunately for us, our United Women in Faith foremothers were on the front lines gaining justice for the oppressed and were thought to be troublemakers. Are you like I was, worried about gaining a reputation for causing trouble? Will you accept the challenge to step outside of your comfort zone? Only God knows what opportunities await you. May we become known as those pesky United Women in Faith, tirelessly seeking justice for all.

We Serve. We Advocate. We make a difference!

Joyce Genz

We serve.

We advocate.

We make a
difference.

FROM NOMINATIONS

Our Committee on Nominations is planning the election of officers later in the fall.

Please fill out a Talent Bank form (next p.) and consider joining the Executive Mission Team with your God-given gifts to serve women, children, and youth around the world.

The following positions will need to be filled in 2023: (Duties of these leaders are given in more detail in the current version of the *United Women in Faith Workbook*.)

Vice-President – works closely with the president in understanding and interpreting all aspects of the program of United Methodist Women; performs the president's duties in the absence of the president; chairs the Committee on Programs guiding its members in planning programs, determining needed resources, involving a variety of women in the planning process.

Treasurer – See pp. 34-40 of handbook.

Communications – keep members informed of upcoming meetings; gather news from the district communications coordinator to be included in the conference newsletter, the *Alert*.

Membership, Nurture, and Outreach – works actively to fulfill the Purpose and find creative ways to nurture current members and cultivate new members.

Spiritual Growth – understand and communicate the connection between personal spiritual development and mission as expressed through social and global involvement; organize and promote special times and events for worship, prayer, and meditation such as, A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial, ecumenical worship, retreats, social action and advocacy events, and devotions at meetings.

Chairperson of Nominations (Selected from within the committee) – guides the committee in its work to find leadership for the conference. It is important that the committee know the skills, interests, and leadership potential of all AWF United Women in Faith to select those with the qualifications for the open officer positions.

Member of Committee on Nominations (Class of 2027)

Education and Interpretation (Still unfilled from last year) – promote and interpret the need for Mission Giving to fund the total mission program of United Women in Faith, including ministries with women, children, and youth, leadership development, spiritual growth, service and advocacy, and transformative education.

Two nominees and one alternate for National Director from the AWF-UW Faith Conference

URGE EACH MEMBER TO SEARCH HER HEART PRAYERFULLY TO FIND A PLACE OF SERVICE.

TALENT BANK



United Women in Faith

TALENT BANK INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE LEADERSHIP ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Please consider one of these open positions, and be receptive if a member of the Committee on Nominations contacts you. Also, please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Blessings,

Desiree Clarke

Chairperson of Nominations

(251) 454-5549

(Please type or print) Date

NAME

ADDRESS

EMAIL

TELEPHONE: Home Cell

LOCAL CHURCH AGE

RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP

EMPLOYED Full time Part time

EXPERIENCE IN UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Local District

Conference Other

SPECIAL TALENTS AND SKILLS

Should have Computer skills and be able to use Excel (Treasurer) or Word (Secretary)

ABILITY TO BE AWAY FROM HOME OR EMPLOYMENT FOR:

Full Day Weekend Extended Period of Time

OTHER SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION

If person filling out form is same as the person named, complete the following:

You may consider my name for:

any position at the Conference level

any position on the District level

any specific positions(list)

Name of Person Submitting Information

This form is available in fillable format at our website: awf-umw.org/forms



Southeastern Jurisdiction Quadrennial Meeting

WHERE: Chattanooga, Tennessee

WHEN: April 19-21, 2024

Registration opens September 2023

Early Registration: \$210 (thru December 2023)
Late Registration: \$240 (after December 2023)

THE TABLE IS OPEN TO EVERYONE - NO NEED TO BELONG TO
UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH, SO BRING A FRIEND!



MISSION GIVING

SAVE YOUR DOLLAR BILLS.....

with a "J" on them for "Jesus" and "Jurisdiction"
AND "G" for "God".



For additional information, go to our website at: www.sejuwf.org

MISSION U – REGISTRATION DEADLINE: JULY 10, 2023

From www.awf-umw.org

2023 Alabama West Florida Cooperative Mission u Event Registration Form
JULY 22, 2023 - Registration Deadline: July 10, 2023

Aldersgate United Methodist Church – 6610 Vaughn Rd. –Montgomery, AL

Living the Kin-dom: Exploring the Lord’s Prayer

Mail this completed form with full payment to Betty Helms, Registrar – 3043 Headland Ave, Dothan, AL 36303 – email: betty@fumcdothan.org Cell: 334-790-8962. Make checks payable to Mission u. For online registration and credit card payment use the link: <https://www.awf-umw.org/>. Direct all questions to the registrar. When possible, an email confirmation will be sent to the registrant.

NAME _____ DISTRICT _____

ADDRESS _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Please check all that apply: Female Male Clergy Lay CEU Credit

National Director Jurisdiction Officer District Officer Conference Officer Scholarship Recipient

FEES: Class fees cover: Study Book + mailing exp. **NOTE: A \$10 Registration fee is required.**

PLEASE NOTE: Registrations received after the July 10 deadline the study book will be mailed but, may not be received in time for Mission u.

_____ Registration fee, Lunch & Study book) \$50

_____ Registration fee – Lunch (NO STUDY BOOK)..... \$30

_____ Optional Offering..... _____

TOTAL SUBMITTED.....\$ _____

◆ I will be attending the Study. Please select below which class you will be attending.

ADULT _____

YOUTH _____

CHILDREN _____

Saturday Schedule:

8:30 a.m. WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENT

9:00 a.m. – 12 Noon: Class Time

12 Noon – 1 p.m. Lunch Break

1 p.m. – 4 p.m. Class time

4 p.m. – 5 p.m. Closing Plenary

Mission u 2023



LIVING THE GOOD NEWS

Reflecting God's Love

This study gives fresh eyes to the Lord's Prayer. Often learned by rote, the Lord's Prayer is a rich guide for how we can live out God's kin-dom in our lives. Participants dive deep into the meaning of each line over the course of the study.

REGISTER ONLINE: www.awf-umw.org

HAPPY FOURTH of JULY!

A PRAYER FOR OUR COUNTRY

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!

LET US THANK ALMIGHTY GOD FOR OUR MANY BLESSINGS.

**MAY WE BE WILLING TO SHARE HIS LOVE, GRACE, AND MERCY
WITH ALL OF HIS CHILDREN.**

AND ABOVE ALL,

LET US SHARE THE ONLY REAL HOPE FOR THIS WORLD, JESUS CHRIST.

AMEN

FROM UNITS IN THE CONFERENCE

Central Alabama District President's Message

Hello, my dear friends in United Women in Faith.

Here we are at the mid-way point of another year in the mission work we are doing for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Many of us have already planned and/or accomplished some of our intentions to serve this year.

In the Central Alabama District, we are looking forward to our next district-wide event, District Mission Study, "Who Can We Be Together?" set for May 20 at Auburn UMC. With a minimal "crew" in leadership positions, we are continuing our work to lead, grow spiritually, build community, and outreach as best we can, always seeking God's guidance and prayers of our fellow travelers.

During this time of tremendous change in our churches, let us remember that our mission work (our spiritual growth, leadership development, and support for women, children, and youth in our communities and around the world) is not tied to a particular church. As an organized body of united women, we are, however, tied to each other in our commitment to help lead, develop, grow, and make a positive impact on the intended betterment of our world. Keeping that in mind, the future of this organized body of women is in good hands, and thank God for that.

The United Women in Faith 2022 Census Survey is available online. Unit presidents and conveners, grab it, complete it, and submit it so that the Alabama West Florida Conference of United Women in Faith can be on record for all the good being done and to make suggestions on how we, as an organized body, might grow and be better. Your actions, ideas, and suggestions are important. Let them be known.

Have a great, fruitful summer and early fall. God bless each of you.

Respectfully submitted,
Marsha Clayton
Central AL District President



"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