



ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE



Debbie Bracewell
Conference President

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our Executive Team for the Conference met recently, and it appears we encounter similar issues on the local, district, and conference levels. What is the issue—encouraging members to be leaders. Developing leaders is an important element of United Women in Faith. The leadership traits you develop locally or on up the ladder go much further than our unit, district, or conference. We may become church leaders, community leaders, or leaders in our profession. Leaders enjoy serving others and making a difference. Leaders are passionate about our work and learn how to inspire and motivate others. We enjoy the relationships we develop, and we understand servant leadership. I won't tell you that leaders always enjoy being leaders—we have good experiences and not-so-good experiences just like everyone else. But seeing the positive results of our work, in combination with others, is truly a blessing.

Knowing we made a difference in a community, a school, or a person's life is our reward.

Recently our contemporary church band sang "Voice of Truth" by Casting Crowns. The lyrics spoke to me about overcoming fear, doubt, or inadequacy:

"Oh what I would do to have
The kind of faith it takes
To climb out of this boat I'm in
Onto the crashing waves
To step out of my comfort zone. . ."

The Voice of Truth tells me a different story
The Voice of Truth says,
'Do not be afraid!'
And the Voice of Truth says,
'This is for My Glory. . ."

This song references our legacy of "showing up and getting things done," and this continues to be our message as United Women in Faith. Positive, faithful leaders will guide us as we continue to serve women, children, and youth locally and globally.

Mark your calendars for

- ♦ **Aug. 17, Mission u at Fairhope FUMC**
- ♦ **Oct. 25-26 for Spiritual Enrichment Retreat at Blue Lake.**

Leaders Make a DIFFERENCE

SOME LEADERS MAY SERVE THE WORD, AND OTHERS MAY SERVE TABLES, BUT ALL LEADERS SERVE! AS NOTED IN ACTS 6, SERVICE IS SACRIFICIAL AND OFTEN MEANS THAT YOU WILL GIVE MORE THAN OTHERS MAY RETURN, BUT WE KNOW THAT JESUS SAID THAT GIVING IS BETTER THAN RECEIVING.

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DAILYCHRISTIANHELP.COM

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REPORT FROM JULY 2024 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

At the July Executive Meeting, **Desiree Clarke, Chair of Nominations**, presented a slate of officers for **2025**. The slate listed below will be presented to the voting membership at the Spiritual Enrichment Retreat in October.

Interim President:	Betty Helms
Vice-President:	Desiree Clarke
Secretary:	Open
Edu & Interp:	Cynthia Jackson
Membership, Nurture, Outreach:	Clara Ester
Spiritual Growth:	Josie Cutchens
Social Action:	Laurel Akin
Chair of Nominations:	Gerry Stiffler
Member of Committee on Nominations: (Class of 2025):	Marsha Clayton
(Class of 2028):	Cathy Peterson

Betty Helms, Standing Rules Chair, presented the following Standing Rules revisions:

IV. Committees

I. Finance-- add **e. Mission Coordinator for Social Action**

I. Finance-k. Revise to add ("if necessary")

IV. Committees

K. Cooperative Mission u.

1. **i. Add Communication Coordinator**

VI. Assembly/Jurisdiction Quadrennial Meeting—

A. delete word **Assembly**

B. **Three conference officers and one alternate shall serve as representatives to Assembly gatherings as follows: representatives shall be president, vice president, and secretary. The treasurer shall serve as the alternate.**

These will be presented to the voting members at Spiritual Enrichment Retreat for approval.

Changes approved to **Policies** at the 2024 July Executive Team meeting:

Finance N. Contributions to other agencies

2. Delete Pensacola and Mari-anna/Panama City/Dothan and insert "is the Panhandle District.

O.

4. Guests at Meetings and Events: Add at end-- "Reimbursements to be determined by funds availability."



United
Women
in Faith

Attention Communication Coordinators, share news and photos from UWFaith events with your AWF Conference *Alert* editor,

Deanie DeFelix, email:

deanie575@gmail.com

Cell: 850-209-3834

From the Conference Vice President



United
Women
in Faith

Check our website for
updates on SER

www.awf-umw.org



From the Conference Treasurer

**“YOUR
DOLLARS
DO COUNT
AND ARE
NEEDED
NOW MORE
THAN
EVER!”**

REPORT OF THE AWF-UMW TREASURER				
For the Year 2024		as of 6/30/24		
MISSION GIVING (PLEDGE)	Pledge	Paid by Districts	Balance	% Paid
Marianna/PC/Dothan	18,000	7,236	10,764	40.2%
South West (Mobile)	15,000	5,539	9,461	36.9%
Central Alabama	14,000	3,163	10,838	22.6%
Pensacola	5,000	0	5,000	0.0%
Events - Offering	2,700	0	2,700	0.0%
TOTALS FROM DISTRICTS	54,700	15,938	38,762	29.1%

It has been a challenging time for many of us. Post COVID-19 we immediately went into a name change for the United Women in Faith, and at the same time we endured the uncertainty of disaffiliation. We encourage you to continue investing in the future of UWF by supporting your district’s mission giving. By doing this you are opening doors for others, your family and community and those who follow in your footsteps. Soak up the experience and keep at it. We’ve got this!

Luck has been explained as the combination of opportunity and preparedness. Life is full of opposition and opportunities. We must become a version of what we want UWF to become, which means we must continue to work hard, build, and be open so that we are prepared for every opportunity that comes to us. Your dollars do count and are needed now more than ever!

Cynthia Brown

AWF-UWF Treasurer
Alert

Fall 2024

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ANOTHER REMINDER.

There are scholarships (3) for the 2024 Spiritual Enrichment Retreat at Blue Lake on October 25-26. My duties as Secretary include promoting and chairing the committee that reviews applicants and then decides those to be awarded for this event. Just go to our Website at

<https://www.awf-umw.org/>

Find “Resources”, click, Click on “forms” and then scroll down to scholarship form pdf.

All other directions are included on the form.

As you’ll read in the Policies, there are criteria and a timeline to be considered. See AWF-UW Faith Policies below:

I. FINANCE

F. CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIPS

1. There will be three scholarships awarded to Annual Day and three to Spiritual Enrichment Retreat. The recipient of a scholarship shall be chosen from one of these categories: *First Timer, Under 39, Newly Retired women.*
 - a. Applications for these scholarships shall be requested from the conference secretary or downloaded from the Conference United Women in Faith Website. Applications shall be submitted to the conference secretary thirty days (30) prior to the event. No application shall be considered that does not meet this deadline.
 - b. A committee of the secretary, mission coordinator for spiritual growth and the vice-president shall review the applications and choose the scholarship recipient.
 - c. The recipient and the conference treasurer shall be notified two (2) weeks prior to the event.
 - d. The recipient shall submit a registration form immediately to the registrar and the treasurer will cover the expenses.
 - e. If the chosen recipient is unable to attend, funds will revert to the scholarship fund.
 - f. The conference treasurer shall pay the designated amount from the conference budget line item for each of the events.

CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Debbie Bell

AWF-UW Faith Secretary
Scholarship Chair



**BLUE LAKE
SUNRISE**



On the web 24/7!

We're on the web

www.awf-umw.org

ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE

From Education and Interpretation

Greetings to ALL,

There are so many ways to give and spread God's love across this wonderful nation God has given us. The Big Garden is one of our great giving opportunities that began in 2005 as a program of **United Methodist Ministries**. Initially funded by the USDA's Community Food Project, The Big Garden had a goal of creating 12 community gardens in three years. Five years later The Big Garden included 26 gardens in the metro-Omaha area and added a sister project, The Big Rural Garden, in Southeast Nebraska.

Today, The Big Garden is a network of 200+ community gardens in metro-Omaha and rural and semi-rural communities in Nebraska, Iowa, and Kansas. Their goal is to reduce hunger by increasing access to fresh, healthy produce and teaching people to grow, cook, and preserve their own food. The Big Garden is funded by private grants and foundations, the Great Plains United Methodist Conference, the Missouri River District of the Great Plains Conference, and individual donors. They have an awesome web site with many ways to give and support their goals.

United Women in Faith's support also helps Northcott Neighborhood House in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, host one of the nation's longest-running Juneteenth celebrations by helping to pay for things like safety barricades, security, and sanitation. This year more than 50,000 people attended the parade and festival, and our dollars of faithful giving helped to make that possible. Together we are helping them to continue "Empowering families!" Our help provides communities with space, activities, and the opportunity to engage in community building.

Lastly, prayerfully consider making a planned gift to The Legacy Endowment Fund and becoming an 1869 society member. Your thoughtful planned gift will not only enable you to leave a personal legacy that aligns with the way you choose to live your life - putting your faith in action, but your gift will also continue to grow as part of a permanently invested endowment, providing support for the vital mission work of future generations of United Women in Faith!

Cynthia Jackson
E & I Coordinator
And advocate for children and women





“The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by human beings for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison people because they are different from others.”

President Lyndon B. Johnson

From Conference Social Action

Empowering Change: From Charity to Social Action

With Women United in Faith, social action is where our faith and love become action. However, sometimes we confuse the differences between charity and justice work. Our Districts and Units do a lot to help people in need by giving them money, clothing, or food. While necessary for short-term relief, it does nothing to change the problem that caused the person, the community or the group of people to be in a situation requiring assistance. However, social action seeks to transform systemic injustice. We need to be more intentional with our work in fighting injustice.

At the conference level, we have participated in previous social action campaign actions. Also in alignment with our UWF values, you have adopted actions that make the most sense in your district or unit to influence relevant decision-makers and/or engage enough people who together can bring about change. To help you organize a campaign in alignment with your priorities, you may download *SISTERS IN ACTION Community organizing toolkit for putting our faith and love into action* By Ilka Vega Contributor: Emily Jones and other campaign resources from uwfaith.org or contact me for assistance.

To work effectively toward a goal after you select your cause, it is wise to create an action statement. By filling in the blanks with your strategy and goals, you will have a strong mission statement to motivate participants.

If we do _____, then we’ll accomplish _____ in the short-term, which will lead to fulfilling our vision of _____ in the long-term, because _____.

Here are some general action ideas that you can use in any campaign.

Host District-Wide Discussions:

Engage in open conversations about social issues.

Forge Partnerships:

Collaborate with local groups fighting injustice.

Promote Voting Education:

Encourage informed voting without dictating choices.

Advocate for Legislation:

Stay informed about local, state, and national laws.

Urge leaders to support systemic change.

Share personal experiences to raise awareness.

Engage with Elected Officials: Calls, letters, and visits matter.

Spread the Message with Posters, open letters, and pledges.

Host Community Vigils to Pray for justice and unity.

Remember, visibility matters. Let’s be the change we seek!
Blessings on the journey,

Joyce Genz





We glorify God when we use our skills to serve others in love as brothers and sisters in Christ. Sharing our talents and working together to spread God's love to the ends of the earth will always result in unimaginable blessings.

From Conference Nominations Coordinator

The Committee on Nominations is still looking to fill some positions on the Conference team. We will be voting on new officers at the Spiritual Enrichment Retreat in October at Blue Lake. The following positions will need to be filled in 2024. (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 Women in Faith; performs the President's duties in the absence of the President; chairs the Committee on Programs guiding its members in planning programs, determining resource needs, involving a variety of women in the planning process.

Secretary

Records minutes of all meetings and events, including conference calls and conference executive meetings and distributes those minutes to the mission team as soon as possible (within two weeks) for review. Assists the President in setting the agenda for conference meetings and events; takes care of and coordinates all written correspondences.

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.

Social Action Coordinator

Assists women in the districts in study, action and reflection regarding current and emerging social, economic, environmental and political issues. She helps the unit or district choose at least one priority social action issue every year and works to promote the conference's current goals on social action.

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

Blessings,

Desiree Clarke

Chairperson of Nominations
251-454-5549



**TALENT BANK INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE LEADERSHIP
ALABAMA WEST FLORIDA UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**

(Please type or print) Date _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____

TELEPHONE: Home _____ Cell _____

LOCAL CHURCH _____ AGE _____

RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP _____

EMPLOYED Full time _____ Part time _____ Retired _____

EMPLOYMENT POSITION _____

EXPERIENCE IN UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

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 _____

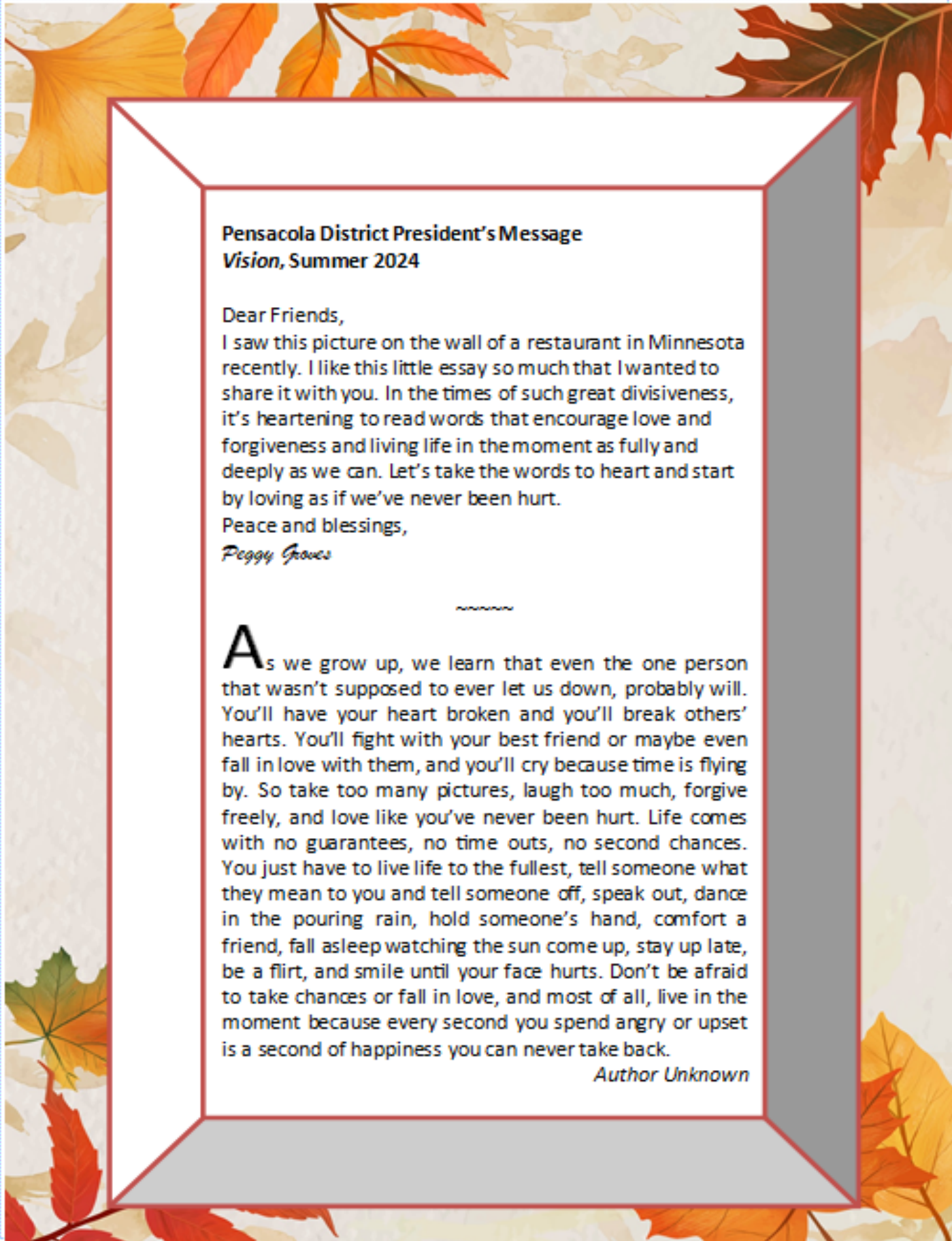
OTHER SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION

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 _____



Pensacola District President's Message
Vision, Summer 2024

Dear Friends,

I saw this picture on the wall of a restaurant in Minnesota recently. I like this little essay so much that I wanted to share it with you. In the times of such great divisiveness, it's heartening to read words that encourage love and forgiveness and living life in the moment as fully and deeply as we can. Let's take the words to heart and start by loving as if we've never been hurt.

Peace and blessings,

Peggy Groves

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**A**s we grow up, we learn that even the one person that wasn't supposed to ever let us down, probably will. You'll have your heart broken and you'll break others' hearts. You'll fight with your best friend or maybe even fall in love with them, and you'll cry because time is flying by. So take too many pictures, laugh too much, forgive freely, and love like you've never been hurt. Life comes with no guarantees, no time outs, no second chances. You just have to live life to the fullest, tell someone what they mean to you and tell someone off, speak out, dance in the pouring rain, hold someone's hand, comfort a friend, fall asleep watching the sun come up, stay up late, be a flirt, and smile until your face hurts. Don't be afraid to take chances or fall in love, and most of all, live in the moment because every second you spend angry or upset is a second of happiness you can never take back.

*Author Unknown*



United  
Women  
in Faith

July 22, 2024

For Immediate Release

**Contact:** [press@spotlightpr.org](mailto:press@spotlightpr.org)

NEW YORK — United Women in Faith today announced the names of its new 25-member board of directors and a new Program Advisory Group for the 2024-2028 quadrennium. Conference United Women in Faith delegates elected 20 new directors to represent their respective areas in recent jurisdiction meetings. Five additional directors were selected by the extended governance committee of the outgoing board to enhance age and racial diversity of the board. A nominating committee from outgoing and incoming board members also named members to serve on the organization's Program Advisory Group for the upcoming quadrennium.

**Elected officers for the new board:**

**President:** Jana Jones | Mountain Sky Conference

**Vice President:** Heidi J. Careaga | Wisconsin Conference

**Secretary:** Melba McCallum | North Carolina Conference

**Chair, Finance:** Julia Paradine-Rice | Michigan Conference

**Chair, Governance:** Mikele Haskins-Delmore | Baltimore-Washington Conference

**The 20 board members elected by United Women in Faith jurisdiction meeting delegates:**

**North Central Jurisdiction**

Heidi J. Careaga | Wisconsin Conference

Kim Harris | Minnesota Conference

Roxie Hutsell | West Ohio Conference

Julia Paradine-Rice | Michigan Conference

**Alternates**

Lois Moreland-Dean | Northern Illinois Conference

Kathie Clementz | Indiana Conference

**Northeast Jurisdiction**

Yvonne Bouknight | Greater New Jersey Conference

Allison Francesco | Susquehanna Conference

Mikele Haskins-Delmore | Baltimore-Washington Conference

Hazel McIntosh | New York Conference

**Alternates**

*Alert*

Fall 2024

### **South Central Jurisdiction**

Patricia Dye | Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference

Lynne Grandstaff | Central Texas Conference

Cynthia Harry | North Texas Conference

Kelly Grace Loeb | Missouri Conference

### **Alternates**

Cheryll Felder | New Mexico Conference

Yolanda Faye Perry | Oklahoma Conference

### **Southeastern Jurisdiction**

Stephanie Dressler | North Georgia Conference

Renee Hayes | Western North Carolina Conference

Zan Jones | [Alabama-West Florida Conference](#)

Melba McCallum | North Carolina Conference

Patsy Thomas | South Georgia Conference

Katy Wrona | [Alabama-West Florida Conference](#)

### **Alternates**

Margaret Gipson | Mississippi Conference

Lori Sluder | Holston Conference

### **Western Jurisdiction**

Hamu Chigwada | Mountain Sky Conference

Jana Jones | Mountain Sky Conference

### **Alternates**

Laddie Perez-Galang | California-Pacific Conference

### **The five additional board members are:**

Olhivia Abigail Gutierrez | Rio Texas Conference

Susan Kim | New England Conference

Deborah Pintsch | Alaska Conference

Stephanie Pounds | Texas Conference

Marilyn Reid | Pacific Northwest Conference

**Alert**

**Fall 2024**

Jurisdiction presidents become members of the Program Advisory Group upon their election. All others listed were elected at the organizational meeting on July 19, 2024.

**Program Advisory Group members:**

**North Central Jurisdiction**

Linda Blazek Garvin | Iowa Conference  
Heidi J. Careaga | Wisconsin Conference  
Susan Connor | Illinois Great River Conference  
Linda Crowell | East Ohio Conference | *Jurisdiction President*  
Diana Davis | Northern Illinois Conference  
Kim Harris | Minnesota Conference  
Kathy Hopkins | East Ohio Conference  
Roxie Hutsell | West Ohio Conference  
Emma McKirdy-Wilsey | Dakotas Conference  
Julia Paradine-Rice | Michigan Conference  
Felicia Stewart | Indiana Conference

**Northeastern Jurisdiction**

Yvonne Bouknight | Greater New Jersey Conference  
Ruth Campbell | Peninsula-Delaware Conference  
Gail Douglas-Boykin | New York Conference | *Jurisdiction President*  
Allison Francesco | Susquehanna Conference  
Mikele Haskins-Delmore | Baltimore-Washington Conference  
Barbara Hess | Western Pennsylvania Conference  
Susan Kim | New England Conference  
Hazel McIntosh | New York Conference  
Judy Raines | West Virginia Conference  
Myka Kennedy Stephens | Eastern Pennsylvania Conference  
Marthalyn Sweet | Upper New York Conference

**South Central Jurisdiction**

Tanya Barlow | New Mexico Conference  
Cathy Blackwood | Arkansas Conference  
Carolyn Cobb | Northwest Texas Conference  
Melanie Dewey | Oklahoma Conference  
Patricia Dye | Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference  
Charlotte Gooday | Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference  
Lynne Grandstaff | Central Texas Conference  
Olhivia Abigail Gutierrez | Rio Texas Conference  
Cynthia Harry | North Texas Conference  
Stacie Hawkins | Texas Conference | *Jurisdiction President*

## **Southeastern Jurisdiction**

Pat Bellingrath | Holston Conference

**Debbie Bracewell | Alabama-West Florida Conference | *Jurisdiction President***

Garlinda Burton | Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference

Toya Dillard-Allen | Mississippi Conference

Stephanie Dressler | North Georgia Conference

Marcella Forrest | South Carolina Conference

Mae Griner | Florida Conference

Martha Hannifan | Kentucky Conference

Renee Hayes | Western North Carolina Conference

Barbara Jackson | North Alabama Conference

**Zan Jones | Alabama-West Florida Conference**

Melba McCallum | North Carolina Conference

Debbie McDaniels | Virginia Conference

Marilyn Osborne | Central Appalachian Missionary

Patsy Thomas | South Georgia Conference

**Katy Wrona | Alabama-West Florida Conference**

## **Western Jurisdiction**

Maria Capezio Crookes | Alaska Conference

Hamu Chigwada | Mountain Sky Conference

Diane Gin | California-Pacific Conference | *Jurisdiction President*

Jana Jones | Mountain Sky Conference

Young Mae Kim | California-Pacific Conference

Jo Ann Lawson | California-Nevada Conference

Gloria Marple | Oregon-Idaho Conference

Deborah Pintsch | Alaska Conference

Marilyn Reid | Pacific Northwest Conference

### **Who Are We? What Do We Do?**

“We’re a sisterhood acting in faith to tackle the hard work of the world without hesitation. . . . We connect spiritual women to act boldly for justice and transform communities.” [Learn more about us: www.uwfaith.org](http://www.uwfaith.org)