



Conference President End of Year Report

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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

Our guiding scripture for the year reminds us to continue our work for women, children, and youth regardless of the hardships, and we will stand in good stead with the Lord. With the continued changes we have experienced this year, it may not have been easy to remain joyful and hopeful. In the 2023 November/December response, Sally Vonner, our General Secretary and CEO, remarks that we can see circumstances as a “setback or an opportunity to rise to the challenge.” The book of Romans tells us that hope and faith will guide us through difficulties. I often remind myself that eight women led the charge to invest in women’s issues, and today, with all we have, we can continue this legacy of service.

The AWF-UW Faith Conference Annual Day was our first conference-wide event and was held at New Hope UMC in the Mobile area. Friday night included a program on native Americans and the Doctrine of Discovery. District Superintendent Reverend Doctor Deborah Bishop provided words of hope and joy in challenging times.

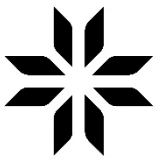
Our premier Soul Care Retreat was held in June at Camp Beckwith in Fairhope, AL. This event focused on providing care for our souls, opportunities to meet new women of faith, and learning about United Women in Faith. With a multi-generational group of women, we worshipped, crafted, and learned the importance of taking care of ourselves. To say “a great time was had by all” is an understatement as this event was a wonderful success!

Mission u was held in July at Aldersgate UMC in Montgomery. On Friday, many of the participants worked at The Beacon Center, home to several nonprofits that partner with Metropolitan UMC to offer holistic care for their neighbors. This year’s study, Living in the Kingdom} The Lord s Prayer, included the historical background of The Lord’s Prayer and related the prayer to how we live as Christians today. (cont. p. 2)

Our last conference event was our Spiritual Enrichment Retreat held at Blue Lake Methodist Camp. Our guest speaker was Reverend Olivia Poole. Attendance was good, new conference officers were elected and installed, and workshops were great fun! New officers installed by Betty Helms are Treasurer Cynthia Brown, Communications Deanie DeFelix, Education & Interpretation Cynthia Jackson, Spiritual Growth Katy Wrona, Committee on Nominations Desiree Clarke, CON Class of 2026 Elizabeth Arp, CON Class of 2027 Frances Parker.

As a conference team, we have used Zoom for conference meetings, national UWFaith meetings, and district president meetings. I have served on the AWF-UMC Conference CORE Team and the Conference Board of Laity. Actively serving on these committees has given me an insight into how our conference works and how we, as UWFaith members, can work with the conference.

We have lost members in 2023 through disaffiliation and death. Our prayers are with those families and individuals. I thank our members for their willingness to move forward, to accept changes, and to find creative ways to bring in new members. Your encouragement and continued attendance, virtual or live, keep 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.



United
Women
in Faith

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities.

2024 SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTION
Get Together!
United Women in Faith

Early registration is winding down, and the last date to take advantage of the \$210 rate is only available now through December 31st.

ONLY 4 WEEKS REMAINING FOR EARLY REGISTRATION

THIS RATE WILL INCREASE TO \$240 ON JANUARY 1ST, 2024.

Early Registration Closes Soon!

SCAN THE CODE ABOVE TO GO TO REGISTRATION SITE

Our Website
WWW.SEJUWF.ORG

CONFERENCE SECRETARY'S REPORT

My Strong Subject Line: A Year in the life of a secretary for the Alabama-West Florida United Women in Faith (or more simply stated “my year-end article for 2023”)

My Call to Action: My secretary duties had begun early on in 2021-2022 but once I determined (ok, accepted) to finish another 2-year term and that I only had 2 more years in my office I immediately began to Pray. I then started my duties of minutes review for the first meeting of the year so we could organize for our first quarter gatherings like, Executive Mission Team meeting (conference leaders), our conference AD2023, and finalizing any corrections for our 2023 Directory. I connected with the National Secretary and other conference secretaries on Zoom to share ideas and for guidance. I then zoomed in with the Alabama-West Florida conference UWFaith “district” secretaries to share directory needs and answer any concerns from that group.

And then I started working on the second quarter mission actions and meetings. . . . Fast forward, here I am writing my last quarter article for the newsletter.

While not busy in conference meetings I was very busy in my Local Unit organizing for mission. My year-end encouragement is this: we all have a strong “subject line” and “a call to action” for UWFaith and our mission focus. It is time consuming for a brief time, but it’s compelling to stretch beyond the comfort of my little spot in this great big world!

To end and remind, Annual Day 2024 Scholarships (three of them) are available. Please check on our conference website for a form to complete and return to me (as Secretary, I am also the Chair for the Scholarship committee) by February 7th, 2024. We’re meeting in the Central Alabama district at Auburn UMC, March 8-9, 2024. The planning committee is already busy finalizing our AWF-UWFaith celebration.

https://www.awf-umw.org/files/ugd/a4590c_1e6e28d7de0046fb8e31c9d33712820b.pdf

2024 theme: **God’s love overflows through us in service for others.** Philippians 1:9-10
Debbie Bell, AWF-UWinFaith Secretary and Scholarship Committee Chair
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REPORT OF THE AWF-UMW TREASURER

For the Year 2023	as of		11/30/23	
MISSION GIVING (PLEDGE)	Pledge	Paid	Balance	% Paid
Marianna/PC/Dothan	26,000	13,329	12,671	51.3%
Southwest	15,000	4,499	10,501	30.0%
Central Alabama	17,000	3,159	13,841	18.6%
Pensacola	15,000	4,995	10,005	33.3%
Events - Offering	2,700	1,090	1,610	40.4%
TOTALS FROM DISTRICTS	75,700	27,072	48,628	35.8%

Greetings:

We knew numbers would be down as our numbers have decreased. We need to be creative in finding ways to meet our pledges. While we don't generally get to see the people that we help through our giving, we do know that we are making a great impact.

A new year is a great opportunity to revive and reinvigorate our units to continue our service to women, children and youth.

Cynthia Brown

AWF-UW Faith Treasurer



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AWFC UWF Social Action End-of-Year Report

Our social action covers a wide range of issues and campaigns that align with our United Methodist social teachings and our United Women in Faith priorities. To support our work, we have four staff liaisons from the United Women in Faith National Office: Elizabeth Chun Hye Lee and Maryann Verghese (socialaction@uwfaith.org) for general social action and role related questions; Ilka Vega (ivega@uwfaith.org) for Climate Justice and the Just Energy for All Campaign; and Emily Jones (EJones@uwfaith.org) for the Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline Campaign, Racial Justice, and the Reading Program. They provide us with regular updates, resources, training, and opportunities to engage with our campaigns and partners. I can assure you they kept me busy all year.

In 2023, I attended virtual quarterly meetings for conference Social Action Coordinators as well as monthly webinars on our current Justice campaigns which are Climate Justice: Just Energy for All and End Criminalization of Communities of Color and Mass Incarceration: Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline and End Corporal Punishment in Public Schools. I created campaign flyers for distribution at Mission u and our fall Spiritual Growth Retreat with the opportunity at our display table to send personalized emails for the campaigns.

I received a scholarship from our National Social Action staff and registered for advocacy training during the virtual Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2023 Conference April 25-27. In addition to attending sessions, the scholarship required participating in a virtual meeting with a senator. I received one-on-one mentoring from a national executive director from another sponsoring agency to prepare me for a 30-minute meeting with Senator Katie Britt's staff. It was a great advocacy experience and I would like to provide similar opportunities for our conference members.

As part the Committee on the Charter for Racial Justice, I presented a session at the Conference Annual Day in March on the Doctrine of Discovery and the traumas of Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools. I also completed the Southeast Jurisdiction UWF's virtual study of White Fragility that ended in May. I am currently on the planning committee to bring the study to our Conference beginning in January. Full details will soon be available for registration.

I served on the planning committee for the AWF Conference Mission u and served as a co-leader with Cynthia Brown for the virtual sessions in October.

One of the responsibilities of the Social Action Coordinator, as stated in the 2023 revised position description, is to identify and connect with national, state, and local level organizations that are aligned with United Women in Faith social action priority issues. In this spirit, I am excited to announce that we will be co-hosting a joint event with Alabama Arise, a grassroots advocacy group that works for a more just and equitable society, on January 22, 2024. We will have a Meet and Greet with the Mobile County Delegation of Alabama State Legislators, where we will have a chance to share our concerns and hopes for our community and state. This is a great opportunity to build relationships and influence policy decisions that affect the lives of women, children and youth in Alabama.

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, 2023

In Case You Didn't Know . . .

OTHER WAYS TO RECEIVE READING PROGRAM CREDIT

- For 2024, books from the 2019, 2020, 2021–2022, 2023, and 2024 Reading Program lists are all eligible for Reading Program reporting credit. You can find a combined list of all these books at bit.ly/RPBookList.
- You are always welcome to use audiobooks if that's an easier and more accessible way for you to read the material.
- You can also receive Reading Program reporting credit for:
 - Listening to the Faith Talks podcast: 1 credit in Spiritual Growth for 2+ episodes
 - Listening to the Voices from the Field podcast: 1 credit in Education for Mission for 2+ episodes
 - Reading response magazine: 1 credit in Nurturing for Community for reading one year (6 issues)
- Reading Program reporting credit can also be earned for being part of a Mission u study:
 - 1 credit in Spiritual Growth for reading a Mission u study on your own
 - 2 credits in Spiritual Growth for joining a Mission u study together with others, as a leader or participant.
- Several movies are also available for Reading Program reporting credit, including Hidden Figures (Leadership Development), Pushout (Social Action), and The Hate U Give (Social Action).

(Shared by Joyce Genz)



Committee on Nominations Report

For the year 2024 the Nominations Committee was able to fill all but 2 positions. The office of Vice President and the office of Membership Nurture and Outreach are still vacant. If you have not agreed to take a position on the Conference Executive Committee, please consider doing so, you can really make a difference in the lives of children, women and youth around the world. The Vice President is one of the voting delegates to the Southeastern Jurisdiction Quadrennial Meeting to be held in Chattanooga, TN April 19-21, 2024. If you are interested in either of these positions, please contact Desiree Clarke at 251-454-5549 or any of the other members of the Committee on Nominations:

Clara Ester (Class of 2024) 251-509-2572
Melda Deverell (Class of 2025) 205-396-5569
Elizabeth Arp (Class of 2026) 251-942-6635
Frances Parker (Class of 2027) (313) 410-0380

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

Treasurer: Cynthia Brown
Communications: Deanie DeFelix
Education and Interpretation: Cynthia Jackson
Spiritual Growth: Katy Wrona
Committee on Nominations Class of 2026: Elizabeth Arp
Committee on Nominations Class of 2027: Frances Parker
Nominees for Board of Directors: Zan Jones and Katy Wrona
Nominees for Program Advisory Group: Zan Jones, Katy Wrona and Laurel Akin (Alternate)

We are also looking for a tech savvy person to serve as the Webmaster for the Conference, so if this sounds like something you would be interested in, please contact Debbie Bracewell or any member of the Committee on Nominations.

Blessings,

Desiree Clarke
Chairperson
Committee on Nominations

Communications Report

To preface this report, please consider Paul's words from Romans 10:14-15,

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?”

Most of us are very familiar with this passage; we understand the crucial importance of following the Great Commission from our Lord to spread the Light of His Word and make disciples in all nations.

But have we realized that the effectiveness of our efforts as United Women in Faith also relies on spreading the word about our Vision, our Mission, our Global Legacy? The countless hours spent in surveying, planning, preparing, praying become only spinning wheels without the dedication of those leaders responsible for communication within UW Faith from the local, to the district, to the conference, to the national, to the global levels. Our communication chairs are challenged to get the word out, along with providing photos, about events, programs, deadlines, etc. The task of informing each member worldwide about the monumental work achieved by United Women in Faith is not always easy. This work can continue only when we hold hands and proclaim that we can do all things through our faith that Jesus Christ will strengthen us.

What you can do to help “spread the word”:

- Designate someone at each level to be responsible for “communications” in a timely manner (includes providing photos).
- Publicize deadlines.
- THEN, REMOVE YOUR QUEEN OF PROCRASTINATION CROWN!
- Ask for help.
- Send names and emails of officers and other members who request to be included in newsletter lists.
- Word documents and jpg files are easier to edit when necessary.

For some inspiring words in this regard, find a copy of *response*, Jan/Feb 2024, and read the excellent articles from the editor, Audrey Stanton-Smith, p. 3, and Mary Beth Coudal, p. 20.

HAPPY 2024!

Please join me in my resolution to become a better communicator of God's power as shown in the great things He continues to do through United Women in Faith.

Deanie DeFelix, AWF-UW Faith Communications Chair