

The Informer



United Women in Faith

South West District United Women in Faith
Spring 2023

President's Ponderings

Summer is fast approaching which means a busy time for United Women in Faith with events to help us broaden our faith. *Mission u* is July 22 in Montgomery at Aldersgate United Methodist Church this focus is on The Lords Prayer. Please try to attend. Look for more info in this newsletter.



For me this season of my faith is renewing. Personally I am ready to resume my active role in the church. I miss the fellowship. I pray that each member of the South West District of United Women in Faith has renewal. It was so uplifting to see so many friends at the AWF-UWF Conference Annual Day and then to see several again at our South West District Annual

Day. We missed those that could not attend.

Please share this newsletter.

Michele Smith
President 2023-24
South West District United Women in Faith

Secretary's Scribbles

Spring into organization!

1. Proverbs 24:27 - "Prepare your work outside; get everything ready for yourself in the field, and after that build your house." This verse emphasizes the importance of preparation and organization before starting a project or task. By staying organized, we can ensure that we have everything we need to complete our work efficiently and effectively.

South West District Mission Team

President
Michele Smith

Vice President

Secretary
Marcie McNeal

Treasurer
Sally Pehler

Communications
Susan McRae

Mission Coordinators

Education and Interpretation

Membership Nurture & Outreach
Stephanie Bromley

Social Action
Ginger Sorenson

Spiritual Growth
Anne Capps

Registrar
Mary Presley

Historian
Shirley Bryan

Parliamentarian
Debbie Bell

Committee on Nominations
Carolyn Brown
Geneva Hogan
Esme Quijada

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2. 1 Corinthians 14:40 - "But all things should be done decently and in order." This verse highlights the value of orderliness and structure in our lives. When we are organized, we can avoid chaos and confusion, and we can better focus on our priorities and goals.

3. Colossians 3:23-24 - "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ." This verse reminds us that we are working for God, not for ourselves or others. By staying organized and productive, we can honor God and use our time and resources wisely to serve Him and others.



Marcie McNeal
Secretary, 2022-23
Southwest District United Women in Faith
251-509-6062

Treasurer's Tidbits

I hope you all have thoroughly enjoyed this beautiful spring weather! With all of the new growth of spring, we have some new growth within our South West District. Joining us are three additional units from the Bay Pines District, Evergreen, Excel and Foley. We want to welcome them to our district and look forward to working to make our district stronger!!

Hopefully this beautiful spring is allowing our units time to gather together. As of April 30th, we have 3 units that have already reached 5 star units! We have 7 of our 19 units in the district represented in current total contributions. Those seven units are: Christ, Foley, New Hope, Springhill Ave, Theodore 1st, Toulminville-Warren St & Wesley Chapel.

Expectation of mission giving for our South West District from the AWF-UWF conference is \$23,000. Total through the month of April is +/- \$8,792.91. With the first month of the second quarter under our belts, we have a little over 1/3 of our budget raised. Let's stay the course!

Please discuss with your units their plans for reaching the goal of being a 5-star unit. The five channels of giving are: Pledge to Mission, Special Recognition, Gift to Mission, Gift in Memory and World Thank Offering.

Please note my current mailing address: Sally Pehler
PO Box 1435
Point Clear, AL 36564

Sally Pehler
Treasurer, 2023-24
South West District United Women in Faith



SOUTH WEST DISTRICT

Alabama-West Florida

Conference

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Units and Presidents

Christ UWF

Debbie Bell

Dauphin Way UWF

Jamie Blake

Evergreen UWF

Rhonda Grant

Excel UWF

Sharon Anderson

Foley UWF

Polly Pack

Grand Bay UWF

Elsie Patrick

Grove Hill UWF

Mary English

Kingswood UWF

Suzanne Meadows

New Hope UWF

Karen Arnold

Spring Hill UWF

Janice Small

St. John UWF

Katy Wrona

St Mark UWF

Jeanette Skinner

St. Mary UWF

Suzette Williams

Theodore UWF

Ginger Sorenson

Theodore First UWF

Evelyn Stallworth

Thomasville UWF

Shirley Hodges

Toulminville-Warren Street UWF

Geneva Hogan

Wesley Chapel UWF

Josephine Glover

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Membership Nurture and Outreach

I read frequently and often compile quotes from various books and magazines because I love well-written words. In a alumni periodical, I read about the art of manifestation. "That is how to create a successful life from a place within where joy, peace and true love reside. And in the opening of the 50th Annual Day meeting of the Alabama-West Florida Conference of United Women in Faith, recently at New



Hope UMC, Galatians 6:9 was quoted, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

When I think of joy, peace, love and doing good, I think of the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Then that brings me to "Koinonia," a love relationship and intimate fellowship with God.

God takes the initiative to invite us into a joyful, peaceful, loving relationship. He places his Holy Spirit within us to enable us to live in a right relationship with Him, His manifestation. No human method or list of steps to follow can maintain that. We need that Koinonia!

But the mission of United Women in Faith, serving boldly with grace, certainly helps us in our Koinonia, our Fellowship, and has been doing so since 1869! United Women in Faith's *response Magazine* always reminds us of the various missions of our faith working through love.

Let us each establish some Koinonia, let's create some joy, peace and love, let's manifest ourselves in God's powerfully written words and let's continue sharpening and energizing the purpose of United Women in Faith.

Stephanie Bromley
Membership Nurture and Outreach Coordinator 2022-23
South West District United Women in Faith

The Five Channels of Mission Giving

-1-

Pledge to Mission

-2-

Special Mission Recognition

-3-

Gift to Mission

-4-

Gift in Memory

-5-

World Thank Offering

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Social Action

We recently held our District Annual Day at St. John UMC. We had a really good turnout.

Michele asked me to speak on our Social Action program. I always like to refer to our Charter for Racial Justice. I want everyone to be familiar with this so we may embrace this program in our churches.

8. That our struggle for justice must be based on new attitudes, new understandings and new relationships, and must be reflected in the laws, policies, structures, and practices of both the church and state.

We need to work to come together as Christians and see each other as one in **His** sight.

Blessings -

Ginger Sorenson

Social Action Coordinator, 2023-24

South West District United Women in Faith



Spiritual Enrichment

I hope everyone had a joyful Easter celebration with their families and sisters in Christ.

At that time, says the Lord, I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. Thus says the Lord: The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, the Lord appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Again you shall take your tambourines, and go forth in the dance of the merrymakers. Again you shall plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant, and shall enjoy the fruit. For there shall be a day when sentinels will call in the hill country of Ephraim: "Come, let us go up to Zion, to the Lord our God." —Jeremiah 31:1-6

Jeremiah offers a wonderful poetic and prophetic plan for restoration in the joy-filled reading for Easter Sunday. The passage speaks with great immediacy of what it will mean for the Hebrew people who are living in exile to be the people of God. Jeremiah is confident in expecting the fulfillment of God's project. As Christians, we affirm that God's project extends to Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection. And, in the Easter season, we remember and celebrate that God extends self-giving love over and over again, not limited by Jesus' death or its horror or the failure of all the disciples or our own hopes and plans.

Our Purpose

United Women in Faith shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand the concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

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It seems very appropriate in this season, after years of grappling with COVID and amid disaffiliations and grief, that we are reminded of the sort of restoration that Jeremiah foresaw. The restoration would follow a time of struggle, of surviving the sword. (Was it the sword of enemies? Of persecution? Of illness? Of division?) And yet, this people, who will be God's people, are assured that they will find grace in the wilderness.

This grace appears in the wilderness, and from a distance (vv. 2-3). What a comfort that image may be to us! Have not we too sometimes felt that God was at a distance from our struggle or that we were deep in a wilderness without a sense of direction? Even there, God is loving the people with everlasting love. We may hear echoes here of Isaiah's vision of many nations streaming to Jerusalem to learn the ways of peace (Is. 2:2-5).

Check our Perceptions

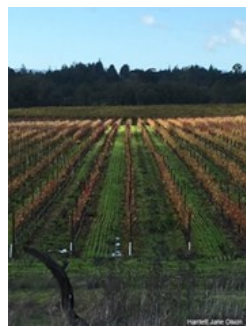
Easter comes to us as a time to check our perceptions. The truth of the gospel is that God has already completed the work of reconciliation for us to walk in. The truth is that God's love persists. The truth is that God's project and Jesus' life are not in vain, but that we are being gathered into a community even before we perceive it. In our Mission u study, we will learn about living as residents of this community, this kin-dom.

This Easter season, I pray that we can see Jeremiah's testimony as a call to us in our organization and in The United Methodist Church. May we step forward to serve, to love and rejoice, to dance and play our tambourines, as Jeremiah prophesied. Easter and its reality in our lives stand for joy, for restoration of the goodness that God created and the reconciliation that Jesus makes possible, and for our acting on our calling. For the people Jeremiah was addressing, that meant planting vineyards and tending them and expecting to enjoy the harvests. Those of us who are not from regions wilderness where grapes are grown might well miss the implication here. One doesn't plant grapevines in

the spring and expect to have wine in the fall. One plants, tends, trains, nourishes, and cultivates the grapevines. Jeremiah is looking ahead to years of restoration work building up to fruitful seasons. So also, may we look ahead to work rooted in hope, stepping into the character of the family of God. For United Women in Faith that means connecting with new women who are seeking to grow in faith and who want their faith to make a difference in the world. It means building right relationships with communities seeking justice and respect. It means giving to fund our work on behalf of women, children, and youth. It means finding grace in the wilderness and allowing God to make all the difference.

Friends and sisters, it's Easter! The tomb is empty. Christ is risen! God's love has accomplished all that is needed. Let us plan and work for the joy that lies ahead.

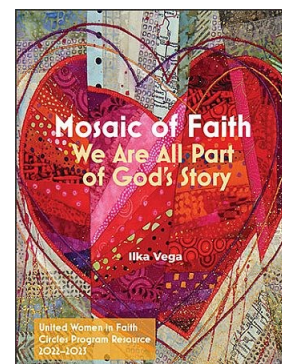
*Harriett Jane Olson, General Secretary & CEO of United Women in Faith.
Children's art is from the 2023 Prayer Guide.*



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You are encouraged to do daily devotional reading from our Prayer Guide. It is also available digitally at the United Women in Faith website. You will find daily encouragement to help you deal with life as it happens.

Please consider joining our conference monthly devotional called, "Food for Your Soul." It is a zoom devotional that I hope will help enrich your day through music and biblical scripture. The link will be the same each month. You can email Zan Jones, Conference Spiritual Growth Coordinator at Mahogany84@hotmail.com, and she will email you back the link.



Upcoming Meeting date:
June 24, 2023 @ 9:00 a.m.

Anne Capps
Spiritual Enrichment Coordinator 2022-23

Soul Care Event Planned

Our Conference has been chosen to sponsor its first Soul Care Event, to be held on June 2 & 3, 2023 at Beckwith. Our theme for this event is "Women Walking in Their Purpose".

How is Soul Care different from our Spiritual Growth event that is held in the fall at Blue Lake? Soul Care events focus on nurturing your mind, body, and spirit while deepening your faith through spiritual practice and creating bonds of sisterhood.

The focus for this event is to encourage and engage young women to become a part of United Women in Faith. Our focus group includes women from 30 to 60 years of age. We encourage each district to encourage a young woman to attend this event.

Please check the conference website for registration information.

Mission u

Living the Good News

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 kingdom in our lives. Participants dive deep into the meaning of each line over the course of the study.

July 22, 2023

Reflecting God's Love

Aldersgate UMC

Register online at <https://www.awf-umw.org/>

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Committee on Nominations

Our district nominating committee needs to fill some vacancies for 2023 only:

- **Vice President**
- Mission Coordinator for **Education and Interpretation**

If you know someone involved in your local unit that would be willing to help out please contact **Carolyn Brown**, Chair of the Committee on Nominations (251-367-6276) or **Michele Smith**, District President (251-895-1306).

In July, we will also need nominees for 2-year terms (2024-25) for **Vice President, Treasurer, and Mission Coordinators for Membership Nurture and Outreach, Spiritual Growth**, and several members for 4-year terms on the **Committee on Nominations**.

Thank you and May God Bless you all.

Carolyn J Brown, Chair

Committee on Nominations 2023

South West District United Methodist Women

Southeastern Jurisdiction Quadrennial Meeting

Get Together!

Where: Chattanooga, Tennessee

When: April 19-21, 2024

Registration opens September 2023

Early Registration through December, 2023 - \$210

Later Registration after December, 2023 - \$240

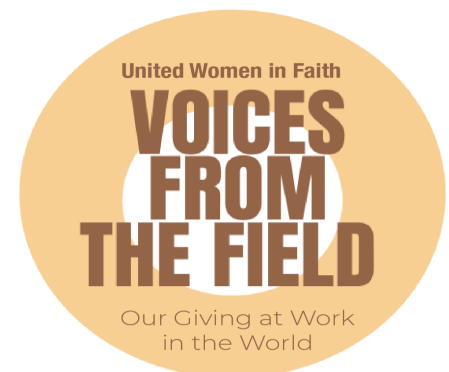
THE TABLE AT THIS CONFERENCE IS OPEN TO EVERYONE - NO NEED TO BELONG TO UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH SO BRING A FRIEND!

Podcasts are an excellent source of informative, thoughtful interactions that are easy listening and have added benefits. Get podcasts at -

<https://uwfaith.org/resources/podcasts/>



Hear some of *response Magazine's* best stories at *Responsively Yours*



Where do our mission dollars go? Find out at *Voices from the Field*.

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**SOUTH WEST DISTRICT UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH
ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE
2023 DISTRICT AND CONFERENCE CALENDAR**

JAN 14	AWF-UW	Faith Conference Executive Mission Team Meet XTeam Officers & District Presidents	Bay Pines District
JAN 28		South West District Mission Team Meeting 10 AM	UMC District Office
MAR 24-25		AWF-UWFAITH CONFERENCE ANNUAL DAY	UMC NEW HOPE UMC
APR 1		South West District Annual Day	St. John UMC
MAY 13		UMCOR Workshop - Hygiene Kits 10 AM	Christ UMC Fellowship Hall
JUNE 10		District Mission Team Meeting (2023 Budget Mtg)	UMC District Office
JULY 16		AWF-UMW Conference Executive Mission Team Meets	Enterprise FUMC
JULY 22		Cooperative Mission u	Aldersgate UMC
AUG ??		South West District Mission Study 10 AM - 2 PM	Toulminville-Warren Street UMC
OCT 6-7		AWF-UWF Spiritual Enrichment Retreat	Blue Lake Assembly Grounds
OCT 21		District Spiritual Enrichment Day 10 AM-2 PM	Foley UMC
NOV 4		Training for District Presidents and Treasurers	via ZOOM
NOV 17		District Mission Team Meeting	via Zoom

