

The Informer



United Women in Faith

South West District United Women in Faith
Winter 2023

President's Ponderings

This year 2023 has started fast and busy. As I prayed for guidance for this article I realized it is easy to grow weary doing good. I am reflecting daily on this scripture *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.*

I often grow weary as I do not immediately see the fruit of my labor. The winter season in Alabama often gives us a false sense of spring's arrival as a result we are often concerned about our plants and gardens. This has been the case for me. I have an orchid plant and a Christmas cactus that belonged to my son's grandmother. The cold snap we had in December was rough. The light in my shed stopped working so the orchid did not have warmth it needed; it is now struggling but it continues to show signs of life. As I watch this plant, I am daily reminded of Galatians 6:9.



As leader for this group, I pray daily for guidance as well as relying on the wisdom of the bigger group. I rest when needed but press on. I know that progress is the result of not giving up. Boy not giving up has been a challenge! Just when I feel weary I receive encouragement from members of the group locally, and at the conference and national levels. Leadership Development Days (LDD) was at the perfect time for me!

There is a new year for us as United Women in Faith. Let us get out there and spread the good works we have to offer.

Michele

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

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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Secretary's Scribbles

Happy New Year United Women in Faith!

The beginning of a new year brings hope, faith, love, and new unit secretaries. Welcome to those who are new in the role of secretary!

Let me introduce myself. I'm Marcie McNeal, your Southwest District Secretary. I'm a member of St. John UMC in Mobile and this is my second year serving as secretary for the Southwest District United Women in Faith. I'm the mother of three and the spouse of Tony McNeal, for 22 years. I'm currently employed in the Mobile school system in Technology. I began my career in Communications and gradually moved into the present world of tech. I hope throughout this year we can utilize the tools of technology to help with our duties as secretary. As a reminder, our duties this year include:

- Keeping accurate minutes of all meetings
- Being the custodian of all records and official documents
- Signing and dating all official, legal, and financial documents
- Keeping an accurate roll at all Unit meetings and events
- Maintaining rosters of Unit leaders & members



And as your Contact for local unit secretaries, my goal is to assist you and be there to help make your role as Unit secretary, easy and manageable. Please call on me if I can be of any assistance.

Marcie McNeal
Secretary, 2022-23
Southwest District United Women in Faith
mcnealms@gmail.com
251-509-6062

Treasurer's Tidbits

Hello 2023!!

By the time that you read this newsletter, we will have found out whether the groundhog has seen his shadow or not! Although we have some things in our lives that are uncertain, we can be certain that our works are needed and wanted in the South West District of our conference.

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

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We ended 2022 with 15 units. We also had 5 units that reached their goal of being a 5 Star unit. We had 8 units that did not send in any money. We collected \$17,745 in 2022 toward our \$20,000 conference pledge. We are sad to report that we lost the Pine Hill, Saraland and South Brookley units. We had lowered our 2023 budget to \$15,000, but this has been adjusted upward to \$23,000 as we welcome new units formerly a part of the Baypines District: **Excel UWF**, **Foley UWF**, and **Evergreen UWF**.

Thank you to our first unit to send money in – Toulminville-Warren Street UWF. Please continue to be creative with your activities and fundraisers throughout the year. If your unit is not meeting in person, but you do collect gifts from your members, please remember to send that in. Our district truly helps the agencies that so desperately need the funds that each unit submits.

I sent every unit a letter to make sure that you all received my new address.

Sally Pehler

PO Box 1435

Point Clear, AL 36564

251-490-4717

s.pehler@comcast.net

Please let me know if you need any forms, cards, etc.

Lastly, please send me an email and/or text with your unit treasurer and their contact information.

Should you need anything from me, please do not hesitate to ask.

Thank you,

Sally

Sally Pehler

Treasurer, 2023-24

South West District United Women in Faith



Membership Nurture and Outreach

So many instances in the Bible confirm the necessity to step out of one's comfort zone and do something God has called one to do. Well, as United Women in Faith, we must reach outside ourselves to do things for God and for others. A mantra we hear is "Love God, Love One Another, Change the World."



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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There are so many ways to adhere to these words. As United Women in Faith consider the following actions:

- * Invite someone to church and/or to a United Women in Faith meeting or occasion.
- * Tell more women what United Women in Faith is all about - working in mission for women, children and youth.
- * Contribute financially to the mission efforts of United Women in Faith.

These and other ways encourage others to step outside of their comfort zones - to become members of United Women in Faith, to nurture and care for one another, and to prove that answering God's calling is spiritually uplifting.

Stephanie Bromley

Membership Nurture and Outreach Coordinator 2022-23

South West District United Women in Faith

Social Action

I remember the day I volunteered to fill the office of Social Action. It was at our Annual Day meeting at my home church, Theodore UMC. I remember thinking to myself *if I don't step up this position will go unfilled*. I felt this was too important a position not to be filled.

Not having any experience in this area and not a lot of knowledge of where United Women in Faith stood on the Social Action issues, I requested some guidance from our District President and received an abundance of information from Joyce Genz, AWF-UWF Conference Social Action Coordinator.

I was so glad that included in this information was a deep commitment to *Racial Justice*. Just as we strive to be in a right relationship with all Christians we must strive to enter that relationship by rejecting racism - for *God is the creator of all people and all are God's children in one family*.

Quoting from the Charter for Racial Justice, we must *commit ourselves as individuals and as a community to follow Jesus Christ in word and deed*.

Visit <https://uwfaith.org/what-we-do/serve-and-advocate/racial-justice/> to read the complete Charter for Racial Justice.

God Bless

Ginger Sorenson

Social Action Coordinator, 2023

South West District United Women in Faith



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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Spiritual Enrichment

Begin where you are. This simple sentence, tucked away in C.S. Lewis's book *Letters to Malcolm*, has the potential to transform your prayer life. In four basic words, it ties together a biblical vision of prayer that avoids two errors that often smother our thanksgiving and adoration of God and hinder our requests to him, especially in relation to earthly blessings and goods. Consider these errors, and whether you recognize them in your own life.

Jesus criticizes both the manner of unbelieving prayers (empty phrases and many words) and the aims of unbelieving prayers (anxiously seeking earthly provision and material goods). Christ's warning implies that his followers can wrongfully imitate unbelievers at precisely these points. We can seek material blessings as our highest goods, anxiously craving and desiring them. And then, we can attempt to manipulate God into providing us these blessings, treating him like a butler who exists solely to supply our earthly needs and preserve our earthly happiness.



Instead, begin where you are – with the desires and needs and anxieties that you actually have. The daily needs are real, and we are taught to ask for them directly. Bring them before God honestly, with no pretense or fakery. No doubt, our earthly desires are often excessive or misplaced. But the best way to reorder them is to bring them to God and let him do the moderating and refining. In this way, we can begin where we are, but unlike unbelievers, we can press beyond where we are. We don't seek merely the earthly provision; we seek God's kingdom *first*, above all, as our highest good.

Thus, as with gratitude, we ask for the earthly good, and then we press through the desire for the earthly good to a deeper desire for the heavenly good. Prayers for daily bread lead naturally (or supernaturally) to prayers for heavenly bread, for the bread of life.

Finally, don't miss what ties all of these prayers together – the goodness of our heavenly Father. Why don't we pile up empty and manipulative words for what we need? Because our heavenly Father knows what we need before we ask (Matthew 6:8). Why don't we anxiously pursue earthly goods? Because our heavenly Father knows that we need them all (Matthew 6:32).

And this presses home the goodness of beginning where we are and asking for daily bread. Just the other day, I was burdened by an earthly problem. I could see no earthly way out of it. And so, I bowed my head and asked God for help. "I don't know what to do, Lord. You will have to do something. Make a way." Thirty minutes later, the answer came, clear as a bell.

Had I not prayed for the provision, I might have missed out not only on the blessing (since God does truly answer prayer) but also on the kindness and care of "our Father in heaven" (Matthew 6:9). When I begin where I am, I pray to him who knows my needs before I ask, and who tells me to ask anyway, because he loves to give good gifts to his children (Matthew 7:11).

(Written By: Joe Rigney (@joe_rigney), President of Bethlehem College & Seminary, Teacher for desiringGod.org.)

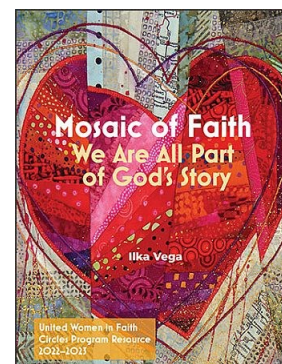
Anne Capps
Spiritual Enrichment Coordinator 2022-23
Southwest District United Women in Faith

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2022-23

Program Resource

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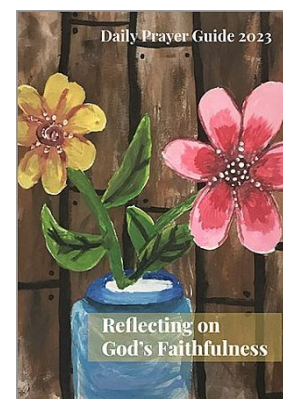


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Committee on Nominations

Happy New Year Everyone! Hoping everyone is having a great year so far.

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

- **Vice President**

The 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 her absence; and guides the planning of programs, determining needed resources and involving a variety of women in the planning process.

- Mission Coordinator for **Education and Interpretation**

The Mission Coordinator for Education and Interpretation (E&I) ensures that members are well-informed about what happens to their gifts and what ministries are made possible through their Mission Giving; promotes and interprets 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; develops and promotes strategies for engaging in and growing Mission Giving at all levels of United Women in Faith, including promotion of the Five Channels of Mission Giving.

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).

Later this year 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



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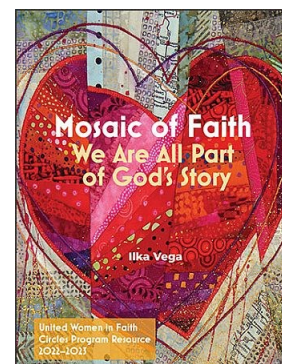
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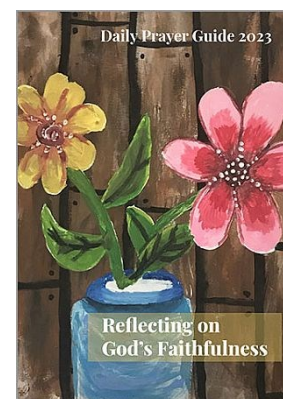
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www.umwmissionresources.org/shopping_product_detail.asp?pid=53535



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Coming soon!

Alabama-West Florida Conference United Women in Faith ANNUAL DAY

With very special guest

AINISE IASMA'U - United Women in Faith President



MAR 24-25, 2023

*NEW HOPE United Methodist Church
5343 Fowl River Rd
Theodore, AL*

Don't let another Annual Day pass you by! The South West District UWF should be the best represented of all of the districts with this event being held in our own back yard - a 30 or 40 minute drive for dozens of us, a couple of hours for others. On Saturday, Bishop David Graves and the District Superintendents of the Alabama-West Florida Conference will join us. We are counting on outstanding participation from our South West District so reserve these dates on your calendar *now* and watch for more information to be announced shortly. (Remember: If our national President can fly across an ocean and the entire country to meet with us in Lower Alabama, then surely we can commit a few hours to be with her!)

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Scholarship Opportunity

A scholarship opportunity is available for Annual Day in Mobile, AL, March 24 and 25, 2023, if you are either a first timer to an Annual Day event, under 39 years of age, or a new member to United Women in Faith (having joined in the past year). If you are interested in applying please submit your information to *Marcie McNeal* at *mcnealms@gmail.com* or mail your criteria to *Marcie McNeal, 1425 Westchester Lane, Mobile, AL 36695*. Please **submit** 30 days prior to the event - **by February 24th**.

Your Name:

Your Address:

Your Phone Number:

Your Email Address:

Your Church:

Your age group: ___ 12 & under ___ 31-50 ___ over 70

___ 13-18 ___ 51-60

___ 19-30 ___ 61-70

1. Have you previously applied for a scholarship offered by the South West District of United Women in Faith? If yes, please explain.
2. Why would you like to receive a scholarship?
3. Why would you like to attend this specific event?
4. Are you involved with your local unit of United Women in Faith? If so list dates and events if known.
5. How will you share your event experience with others following the event?



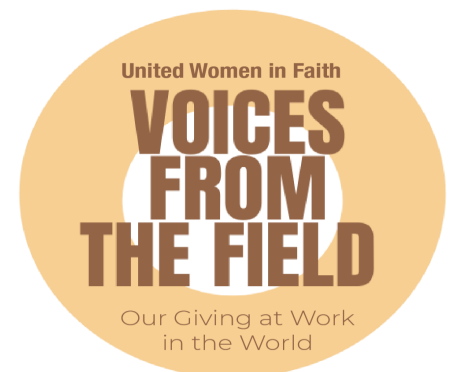
United
Women
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<https://uwfaith.org/resources/podcasts/>



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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 Bay Pines District
XTeam Officers & District Presidents*

JAN 28 South West District Mission Team Meeting 10 AM UMC District Office

***MAR 24-25 AWF-UW FAITH CONFERENCE ANNUAL DAY UMC NEW HOPE UMC
AINISE IASMA'U - United Women in Faith President***

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 Meeting Enterprise FUMC

JULY Cooperative Mission u TBD

AUG 26 South West District Mission Study TBD

OCT 6-7 AWF-UWF Spiritual Enrichment Retreat Blue Lake Assembly Grounds

OCT 29 District Spiritual Enrichment Day TBD

NOV 4 Training for District Presidents and Treasurers via ZOOM

NOV 17 District Mission Team Meeting via Zoom

