



ALERT

Volume 2, FALL 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

Working on my message as conference president for this newsletter encouraged me to look back on the 2023 months that have passed. I am proud to see all we have done as local units, districts, and conference:

- Executive Team meeting in January
- District Annual Days
- District Mission studies
- Conference Annual Day in March
- Soul Care Retreat and AWF Annual Conference in June
- Executive Team meeting in July
- Mission in July

Many of you have participated in some or all of the 2023 United Women in Faith events. Each one of these events brought us closer as a sisterhood, engaged us in social action, and led us into new spiritual inspiration. Don't miss the fall conference and district events—**October 6-7—Spiritual Enrichment Retreat at Blue Lake** and district SERs.

Our future can be just as productive as our past. Audrey Stanton-Smith, editor of the *response*, relates how proud she is "by the way this organization celebrates and embraces its heritage while constantly looking forward, constantly using new leadership tools to work toward the transformation of communities and the world—within limits." This is who we are. We may be smaller in number than in years past, but let us not forget how eight women in 1869 began a "lasting legacy of 'showing up and getting things done.'" Surely, we can continue the work to serve women, children, and youth to positively impact our local and global communities.

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



United Women in Faith did not let the sweltering summer weather hinder us from experiencing another successful event; the Alabama-West Florida Conference UWFaith Mission u team delivered again! This page offers visual proof that younger and older generations can learn from each other about what it means to love and serve the Lord with gladness. If you were unable to attend, you can find information on how to register for a virtual session at the bottom of this page.



For more photos and registration information on how you can experience the wonderful study on the Lord's Prayer, find these links at

www.awf-umw.org

Mission u was an educational experience filled with scripture, sharing, fun, and friendship. [See pictures here.](#)

VIRTUAL MISSION U

If you missed the in-person session of Mission u, you can still participate in the study virtually. A Zoom session will be available on October 10, 17, and 24th. [Click here for the mail-in Registration Form.](#)

FROM THE SECRETARY

This fall we will again meet for our Annual Spiritual Enrichment Retreat at Blue Lake Assembly Grounds in Andalusia. The plans are being finalized now for hosting our United Women in Faith membership on **October 6th and 7th**. Please plan to take this opportunity to gather and join in some focus groups, listening to a special speaker, and of course, take part in the elections of some of our open offices of the Alabama-West Florida Conference Executive Mission Team (leadership.)

As a policy of our AWF-UW Faith, there is a Scholarship Committee that includes the Vice President, the Spiritual Growth coordinator, and the Secretary; the Secretary is Chair of the committee for scholarships to our annual events (i.e., Annual Day (AD) and Spiritual Enrichment Retreat (SER)). When a scholarship is submitted, it must be sent to the Secretary and then the committee meets to review any applications. Based on the scholarship criteria that is provided we review the applicant's info, and then award to the member who qualifies.

Please note that the 2023 Spiritual Enrichment Retreat will now have three (3) scholarships awarded.

And now, I am taking this opportunity to encourage anyone wanting to attend this annual event and be considered as a scholarship recipient to follow the steps provided within the guidelines of the scholarship policy. You can find a scholarship application here in the newsletter, and it is located on our website www.awf-umw.org; just click on "Forms" and then find "conference scholarship form"; there is an Excel document and a pdf document--choose either and download a copy. Complete the form and return as directed.

United Women in Faith Serving Boldly with Grace,

Debbie Bell

AWF-UW in Faith Secretary and Scholarship Committee Chair
mawbel36575@yahoo.com



FROM THE TREASURER

Greetings United Women in Faith,

At the end of our 2nd Quarter of 2023, we are a little slow on getting our Pledge dollars reported. Every year we are falling behind in our mission giving. It is true, now we now have four (4) districts and are smaller in number, but we must rise to the occasion and be committed to giving towards our Pledge to Mission.

CONFERENCE TREASURER'S REPORT as of June 30, 2023

2023 Alabama-West Florida Conference United Women in Faith Pledge to Mission				
Source	Pledge	Paid	Balance	% PD
Marianna/PC/Dothan	26,000	6,361	19,639	24.5%
Southwest (Mobile)	15,000	0	15,000	0.0%
Montgomery	17,000	2,666	14,334	15.7%
Pensacola	15,000	0	15,000	0.0%
Events – Offering	2,700	0	2,700	0.0%
PLEDGE TO MISSION	75,700	9,027	66,673	11.9%

Local and district treasurers need your help to show that the heartbeat of United Women in Faith is healthiest when we participate in 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

The United Women in Faith of the Alabama West Florida Conference was honored to hold our first ever Soul Care Retreat on June 2-3, 2023, at the Beckwith Camp and Conference Center in Fairhope, Alabama. Our conference was awarded a grant from the National Office of United Women in Faith to help sponsor the event. We extended the invitation to other conferences within the Southeastern Jurisdiction.



Soul Care was another Spiritual Growth event that came from the National Office of United Women in Faith as a way of focusing on nurturing the mind, body, and spirit while deepening the faith of participants through spiritual practice and creating bonds of sisterhood.

Our theme for the event was “Women Walking in Their Purpose.” We used an intergenerational approach to the event and limited it to women ages 29 to 60 years of age.

On Friday June 2, 2023, we opened with a welcome and fellowship. After dinner we were blessed by Rev. Kitsy Dixon of Spanish Fort United Methodist Church with a great message. Attendees engaged in a Creative workshop (Diamond Art) where each person created her own personal sea theme coaster. We opened Saturday morning with a very spirit-filled devotional by Cynthia Jackson, who serves as the spiritual growth coordinator at Christ United Methodist Church. Saturday also included Zumba, Bible study, a photography workshop by Deaconess Laurel Akin, and a workshop on essential oils by Debbie Bracewell, our AWF Conference President. We ended our very relaxing and spiritual weekend with a closing message from Rev. Laura Parker of Fairhope United Methodist Church, followed with communion.

We give special thanks for this great experience to the members of the design team: Debbie Bracewell, Cynthia Brown, Cynthia Jackson, Laurel Akin, Katy Wrona, and Zan Jones. This will be an event we hope to continue for years to come.

We look forward now to everyone preparing for our Conference Spiritual Growth Retreat on October 6 - 7, 2023, at Blue Lake in Andalusia, Alabama. The first 20 people that register will receive a Soul Care Retreat backpack gift bag. Please watch for the Spiritual Growth Retreat registration coming soon to the conference website.

Please join our “Food for Your Soul Devotional” on Saturday, September 9, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. via zoom. Remember to email me at Mahogany84@hotmail.com for the zoom link. Let's continue to put our Faith, Hope, and Love into Action.

Sisters In Christ,
Zan M. Jones
Spiritual Growth Coordinator
Soul Care Retreat



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.

Hello Everyone!

August 30, 2023. That's the deadline for this year's Unit Survey. The survey can be accessed by going to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AlabamaWestFlorida> ; it only takes about 15-20 minutes of your time to complete. Doing so helps our national office to gather data, determine where to focus resources, and celebrate all the hard work you're doing at your units.

A few new items have been added to the online store, including the new 2024 bundle that's on sale. It includes the 2024 Daily Prayer Guide, Program Resource, and Adult guide to Mission U. The website is always adding new things, so I encourage you to frequently visit it.

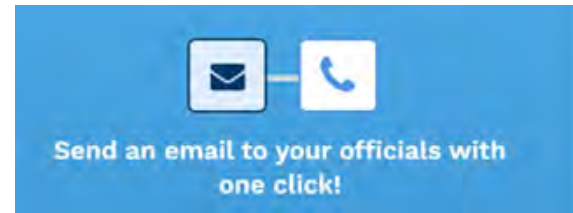
For anyone who may be interested in serving as the next MNO, I have plenty of information and knowledge to share with you! You will not need to reinvent the wheel to succeed in this position. I will set you up for success before you take office and be available to you as a resource if you need it. Anyone is capable of being MNO! If God is leading you to serve United Women in Faith, this may be the position for you!

On a personal note, I have been so blessed to be part of such an amazing Executive Board over the past five years! I loved seeing different parts of the state, different churches in our conference, and most of all experiencing the fellowship that only doing the work of UWFaith can bring. I have made memories with this wonderful group of women that will last a lifetime.

To God be the glory!
Kristine

KristineUWF@gmail.com

FROM SOCIAL ACTION



An important part of our Social Action is to advocate for justice. I am providing information and links to two current email campaigns of United Women in Faith. Included in the description below of each campaign is a link to a prepared email that you can use to automatically contact your representatives. All the difficult work is done for you. All you need to do is add your contact information. You may revise the message to personalize it if you wish. You can share your own stories and statements to explain why this issue matters to you. If you'd like, you can then click through to an additional next step, speaking directly to your legislators' staff members by phone to reiterate this important message in your own voice. This added step can make a big difference in the impact of your advocacy.

1. Lift Your Voice to End Corporal Punishment in Schools

As women of faith, we believe all children and youth are sacred, beloved by God, and deserving of an education that nurtures their God-given gifts and encourages their ongoing growth. The use of corporal punishment in schools undermines student safety and well-being. It is disproportionately used against Black and Native American students, and the echoes of historical violence are disturbingly clear. Corporal punishment should be banned in our schools. United Women in Faith joins Nollie Jenkins Family Center, the Mississippi Coalition to End Corporal Punishment, the Dignity in Schools Campaign, and other long-time leading organizations across the country to urge passage of the Protecting Our Students in Schools Act.

Every member and friend of United Women in Faith is encouraged to take a simple first-step action today: Use the email tool on the link below to urge your legislators to cosponsor this important bill. You can share your own stories and statements to explain why this issue matters to you and/or use the template language already provided. If you'd like, you can then click through to an additional next step at the top of the form to speak directly to your legislators' staff members by phone to reiterate this important message in your own voice. This added step can make a big difference in the impact of your advocacy. To send an email, go to

<https://p2a.co/vUKRTtL> or scan QRCode



Use this URL to see the text of the full bill: <https://www.murphy.senate.gov/download/possa>

(cont. p. 9)

2. Climate Justice

"You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it. You drench its furrows and level its ridges; you soften it with showers and bless its crops. You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the desert overflow; the hills are clothed with gladness. The meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing" (Psalm 65:9-13)

We have a moral responsibility as a nation, and a sacred task as people of faith, to care for our climate and to leave a safe and thriving world for future generations. That's why we need more legislation to prioritize climate justice that will deliver protections and justice for impacted communities, jobs, climate action, and clean energy.

We need more historical investments in climate action that protect both people and creation and ensure that funds prioritize environmental justice and frontline communities and exclude problematic subsidies for fossil fuels and other polluting energy sources. we advocate for clean and just energy and environmental policies such as:

- H.R.1705 & S. 919 - Environmental Justice for All Act
- H.R. 3302 & S. 1601 - Protecting Moms Against Climate Change
- H.R. 963 & S. 68 - A sustainable climate addressing an equitable Farm Bill

To send an email, go to <https://p2a.co/FYtpCzq>

Or scan the QR code



Thank you for contacting your legislators and taking action today!

Joyce Genz

Social Action Coordinator



**BLUE LAKE
IS
CALLING**



FROM NOMINATIONS

This year was especially difficult to find people to fill vacant positions on the Conference Executive Team. Please consider taking a position when a member of the Nominations Committee contacts you. Working together, we can make a huge difference in the lives of women, children, and youth around the world.

I would like to thank everyone who agreed to serve on the Conference level in the following positions:

Vice President - *

Treasurer - Cynthia Brown

Communications - Deanie DeFelix

Spiritual Growth - Katy Wrona

Education and Interpretation - *

Membership, Nurture and Outreach - *

Chairperson, Committee on Nominations - *to be elected by the committee*

Committee on Nominations member - Class of 2026 - Elizabeth Arp

Committee on Nominations member - Class of 2027 - Frances Parker

Nominees for Board of Directors - Zan Jones, Katy Wrona, and Laurel Akin (Alternate)

Nominees for Program Advisory Group - Zan Jones, Katy Wrona, and Laurel Akin

Please note the **openings (*)** for service in the list above. 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 like to do, please let Debbie Bracewell or any member of the Committee on Nominations know.

Desiree Clarke, Chairperson of Committee on Nominations

Members: Shirley Hodges, Class of 2023

Clara Ester, Class of 2024

Melda Deverell, Class of 2025

Reminder from President Debbie Bracewell:

According to our Standing Rules in the Alabama-West Florida United Women in Faith Directory 2023,

The Standing Rules Committee (IV. C. 2.b) shall perform the following duties: "Receive proposed additional Standing Rules which shall be approved by the Conference Executive Mission Team at its summer session and by the Conference organization at the business session during the Spiritual Enrichment Retreat."

During the July 15, 2023, meeting, the following change was presented and approved by the Executive Team-- Standing Rule IX. District Structure. This change requires changing "may" to "shall." The rule should read, "This merging shall require renaming a district."

This change in the Standing Rules will be presented at the October Spiritual Enrichment Retreat and put to a vote.

Get Together!



United
Women
in Faith

GET TOGETHER to feel the joy of faith-filled women, uniting.

GET TOGETHER to nurture your soul.

GET TOGETHER to deepen your relationship with God.

GET TOGETHER to explore the power of love to make a difference.

WHY YOU SHOULD REGISTER

PRICE

FEATURING

**TOGETHER we can do more. TOGETHER we can be more
TOGETHER the power of love in action can change the world.**

Alabama-West Florida Conference United Women in Faith Scholarship Event Application

Three scholarships will be awarded to Annual Day and three to Soul Care Retreat. Preference for awarding a scholarship will be given to applicants who meet one of the following criteria:

First timer, Under 39, new member of AWF-UW Faith having joined in the last year

Please check the event you are interested in attending:

Annual Meeting

Soul Care Retreat

Terms of the agreement:

- a. A committee of the Secretary, Coordinator for Spiritual Growth and the Vice President will review your applications and choose one scholarship recipient per event.
- b. The recipient and the Conference Treasurer will be notified two weeks prior to the event.
- c. The recipient must submit an event registration form immediately to the Conference Registrar.
- d. Registration fee will be covered by the Conference Treasurer.
- e. If you are chosen and unable to attend, funds will revert to the scholarship fund. F. f.
- f. Applications must be submitted to the Conference Secretary thirty (30) days prior to the event. Only applications received prior to the deadline will be considered. SEND TO: DEBBIE BELL, 9640 Sky Vista Dr., Semmes, AL 36575 / mawbel36575@yahoo.com

Name: _____

Address _____

Phone Number(s) _____

Email Address _____

AWF Conference District _____

Local Church _____

Age Group

12 & under

13-18

19-30

31-50

51-60

61-70

Alabama-West Florida Conference United Women in Faith
Scholarship Event Application

1. Have you previously applied for a scholarship offered by Alabama-West Florida Conference United Women in Faith? If yes, please explain.

2. Why would you like to receive this scholarship?

3. Why would you like to attend this specific event?

4. How are you involved in United Women in Faith in your local church? If available, dates and events will be helpful.

5. How will you share your event experiences with others following the event?

Thank you for submitting this application. Please sign below acknowledging you have read and understood the terms of the scholarship agreement outlined in this document.

Signature _____ Date _____

Rec'd by AWF-UW Faith _____