



United
Methodist
Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

ALERT

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Report	2
Vice President's Report	3
SEJ Planning Team	3
Treasurer's Report	4
Spiritual Growth	5
Social Action	5
Membership	6
A Way Forward	7
Scholarship	8
Program Resources	9
Education	10
Photos	11
Communications	13
Assembly	13
Calendar	14

2017 Conference Officers

President	Debbie Bell
Vice President	Joan Simmons
Secretary	Cathy Givan
Treasurer	Jean Creswell
Communications	Debbie Bush
Program Resources	Sally Onan
Spiritual Growth	Nancy Shealy
Social Action	Laurel Akin
M.N.&O.	Tutti Johnson
Education & Interp.	Shirley Hodges

2017 Committee on Nominations

Lorna Wiggins, Chair	Reda Brooks
Cheryl Mothershed	Zan Jones
	Linda Green
President SEJ – Betty Helms	
Vice President National – Clara Ester	
Web Manager – Vera Moore	



HOPE
is the anchor of my
SOUL
hebrews 6:19



*We have this **hope** as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever — Hebrews 6:19-20 NIV*

Alabama-West Florida Conference United Methodist Women Annual Meeting

February 23-24, 2018

Foley United Methodist Church, Foley, Alabama

Keynote Speaker:
Shannon Priddy,
President National United Methodist Women

[Registration Form](#)
[Health Form](#)
[Flyer for Distribution](#)



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

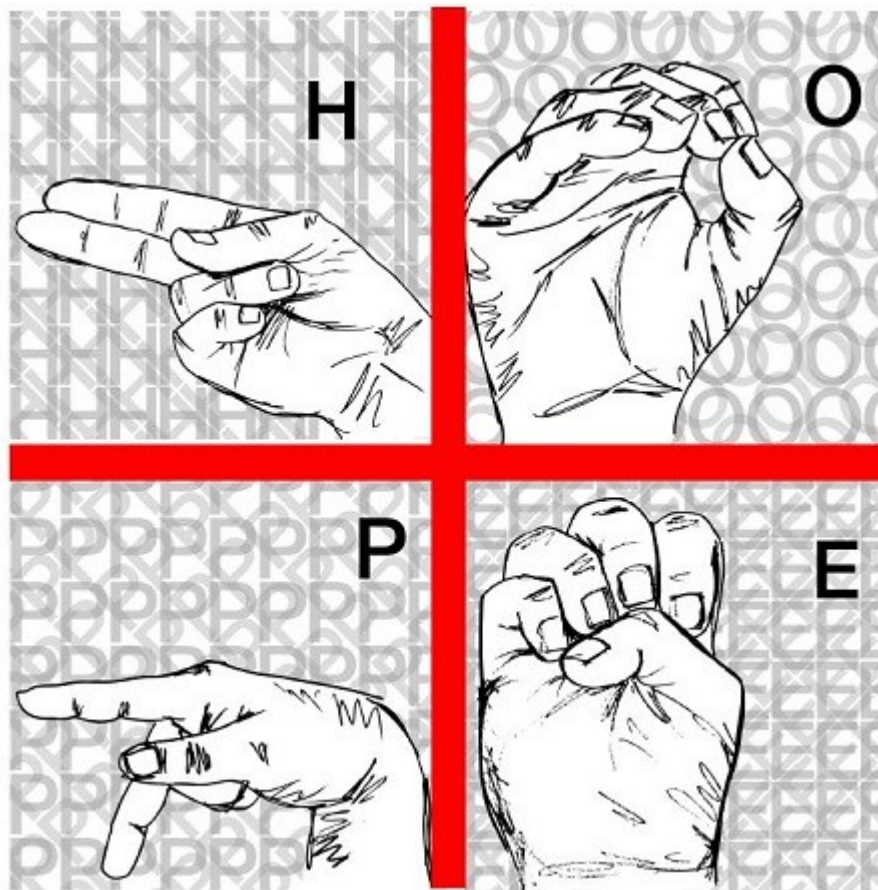
In 2018, our Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Women theme and focus will be about hope. Our supportive Scripture will be from Hebrews, in the sixth chapter, verses nineteen and twenty. "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever"

The signing hands in the picture below reflect a culture that our Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Women may not be reaching; the different nationalities using their native languages in our conference districts may not get to hear our Purpose; the young college woman may can meet for a cup of coffee and be open to a conversation about United Methodist Women and issues we study and get involved in; the woman in the prison may just want to talk of the hopelessness; the elderly woman in the nursing home may just want to sing a familiar hymn or just savor the visitor!

Our "Circle" may not look like it always has in these past years. We have this vision for turning Faith, Hope and Love into Action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world, with ALL women helping.



Debbie Bell
Conference President



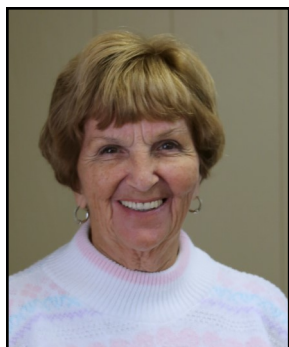
United
Methodist
Women
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

If you are like me, you are wondering where 2017 went. With 2018 just around the corner the planning committee is moving forward with Annual Day plans. We are excited about this meeting for a number of reasons. Our keynote speaker is Shannon Priddy, our UMW president and our bishop David Graves will also be a part of our program. We are pleased to know our district superintendents will again be with us.

We are moving away from Blue Lake and bringing Annual Day to the districts in order to reach more women and bring more women together in different parts of our Conference. We will be able to see what other Districts have to offer and maybe just maybe get younger women to become a part of our events!

We thank the Bay Pines District for hosting Annual Day on February 23 & 24. You will be receiving information on registration and local hotels. What a surprise...the hotels are on the same street as the outlets!!!



Joan Simmons
Conference Vice President

**CONFERENCE ANNUAL DAY
FEBRUARY 23RD & 24TH
FOLEY UMC, BAYPINES DISTRICT**

**Keynote Speaker
Shannon Priddy**

President National United Methodist Women

**FILL OUT YOUR REGISTRATION FORMS NOW!
DON'T FORGET YOUR 2018 HEALTH FORMS!**

FROM THE SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTION PLANNING TEAM:

The Southeastern Jurisdiction Planning Team is asking each conference to submit a logo design and explanation of the design as it relates to the 2020 theme: "Calling u . . . to celebrate" and the support scripture from Romans 1:6 "among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ" (NKJV). (you may also use other translations of this scripture)

Please include: a short bio on the person submitting the design and write the name Alabama-West Florida conference on the back of the design. The submitted designs will be reviewed and determined to represent our conference in the 2020 program book as the possible cover design/logo.

Please submit your entry to me by January 25, 2018.

**Send your submission to:
Debbie Bell, President 2017-2018
mawbel36575@yahoo.com**

TREASURER'S REPORT

Just an update on where the districts are in their 2017 Pledges (as of today). This doesn't mean what we have paid to National but what is been paid by the districts. I will make payments to national after the 10th of December based on our balance in checking after everything has been paid to others and keeping a minimum balance of \$5000 in checking account to start the year. As you can see below only Demopolis and Mobile have reached their goals. However, the districts have until Dec 10th to get more money in to me.

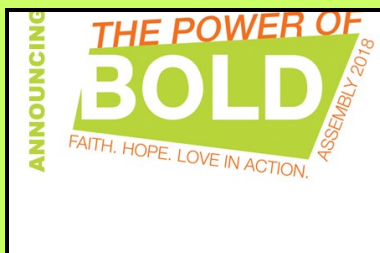
Have a great day and War Eagle and go Tigers to my University of West Alabama tigers who are in the semi-finals of the national Div. 2 playoffs.

MISSION GIVING (PLEDGE)	Pledge	Paid	Balance
Bay Pines	12,200.00	11,492.74	707.26
Demopolis	13,000.00	14,278.57	-1,278.57
Dothan	18,500.00	14,277.00	4,223.00
Marianna/PC	12,800.00	7,739.73	5,060.27
Mobile	20,000.00	21,255.33	-1,255.33
Mtg/Oplk	12,500.00	3,435.75	9,064.25
Mtg/Pratt	12,200.00	7,328.35	4,871.65
Pensacola	25,000.00	23,270.58	1,729.42
Events - Offering		1,959.29	-1,959.29
TOTAL PLEDGE TO MISSION	126,200.00	105,037.34	21,162.66



Jean Creswell
Conference Treasurer

Save the date!



“The Power of Bold” will be the theme of the 19th quadrennial Assembly of United Methodist Women in Columbus, Ohio, May 18-20, 2018. Learn more at

<https://umwassembly.org/news/>

SPIRITUAL GROWTH REPORT

On our journey to Bethlehem, it is always great to remember family and friends but to also remember those who travel with us in Mission! It is time to reflect on all the wonderful things that everyone has done this year and that we have done together!

The Spiritual Enrichment Retreat was absolutely wonderful and I thank everyone who had a part in it and all of the Labors of Love given! We are Sisters in Christ and I am a United Methodist Woman even if I am not a Conference Officer after this year. I am still here in Spirit and in Love.

Have a Blessed Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Always, Your Servant,

Nancy Shealy

Conference Spiritual Growth Coordinator



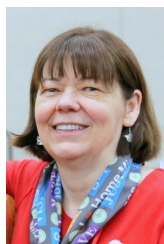
SOCIAL ACTION REPORT

Criminalization
of
Communities
of
Color & Mass
Incarceration

CRIMINALIZATION OF COMMUNITIES OF COLOR: *INTERRUPT SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE*

The title above comes directly from the United Methodist Women website. Criminalization of Communities of Color & Mass Incarceration is one of the four mission focus issues of United Methodist Women for this quadrennium (2016-2020). What is the school to prison pipeline? In her report "[Education or Incarceration: Zero Tolerance Police School to Prison Pipeline.](#)" Nancy A. Heitzeg, Professor of Sociology and Program Director, Critical Studies of Race/Ethnicity at St. Catherine University describes it as "increasing patterns of contact students have with the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems as a result of the recent practices implemented by educational institutions, zero tolerance policies, and the use of police in schools."

I urge you to go to the website at <https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/issues> and learn more, and about the many resources available for education and ACTION on this timely issue!



Laurel Akin,

Conference Social Action Coordinator

Our Purpose:

United Methodist Women 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 concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

Dear Conference **Presidents** and Membership Coordinators,

Yes, it is that time again. 2018 is upon us, and Census 2017 is here. First, I want to thank all of the Conference, District and local leaders who were diligent in completing or making sure the 2016 census was completed. We want to celebrate that we had 100 percent conference reporting! ***WHEN WOMEN AND YOUTH THRIVE, WE ALL THRIVE!***

CENSUS GOALS

Our goal for 2017 is to have 100 percent district reporting and all of our 27,000 local units represented in the census. We are asking for your commitment to make this happen. This will be a joint effort as the Office of Membership will be reaching out to all 27,000 local units by email and mailings to inform unit leaders about the importance of filling out the census and how it relates directly to United Methodist Women's efforts in fulfilling our core commitments: spiritual growth, leadership development, transformative education, service and advocacy and organizing for membership growth.

You will recognize some changes on the form. There are several new questions that are focused on strategies around increasing membership, our social justice priorities, and training needs. Our goal is to increase membership by 2 percent at the district level by 2020, so the feedback received through the census is critical in how we plan strategically to meet this goal.

We are determined to reach this goal. Let's be inspired to share our rich legacy of mission and all that United Methodist Women has to offer, so that we can celebrate another 150 years of turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world! ***WHEN WOMEN AND YOUTH THRIVE, WE ALL THRIVE!***

CENSUS LINK

The Census Link can be found on the United Methodist Women's website or you can forward the direct link: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/census2017. To assist local leaders with completing the census, we have included an instructional video and attached printable instructions on **ASSEMBLY**

We are excited about the anniversary celebrations planned for Assembly 2018, which is fast approaching. You will see on the census form that we are asking that every local unit commit to having at least one member attend this educational and inspirational event. We are also offering a youth track for young people ages 12-18 and would like to see a commitment to send youth and young adults at the Conference, District and local levels. ***WHEN WOMEN AND YOUTH THRIVE, WE ALL THRIVE!***

The process is as follows:

October 2017

Conference Membership Nurture and Outreach (MNO), Membership Coordinator, or President forwards the attached document with the instructional video and form link to the district Membership Nurture and Outreach (MNO) coordinator or president.

District MNO Membership Coordinator or president then sends it on to the local unit president.

The local unit uses the census link to enter the data, which will come directly to the national office.

Conference MNO and district MNO are charged with assisting the local units with sending out the census video and link along with scheduling 1-3 interactive sessions to assist unit leaders who are not comfortable with computers.

Census Form Link: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/census2017

Census Instructional Video Link: https://youtu.be/-D7_d5YGd98

The final deadline for reporting will be March 30, 2018.

What is "A Way Forward Conversation"

During Leadership Development Days (LDD) in November, three of our conference representatives (myself, Pat Dodge and Clara Ester) participated in training sessions to start a process of conversations about how the United Methodist Church might "be church" together across different views that might add to and enhance the work going on in other parts of the church.

Each of us were requested to share what we learned with others and develop a plan to host conversations in our conference and districts over the next 12-18 months. Our *goal* is that most United Methodist Women members *will be aware* of the issues facing the church and that at least 50% of members have participated in facilitated conversations before the Special Session of the General Conference in February, 2019.

Our objectives for these conversations is for United Methodist Women members to:

- 1) be informed of the matters that the Special Session of the General Conference in 2019 has been called to address;
- 2) be prompted to clarify their own thinking about what holds us together as a church and as United Methodist Women;
- 3) be confident in speaking to other church members about their views, including their General Conference delegates, pastors and annual conference leadership.

Upon our return we have provided facilitating materials and hosted a conference call with our Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Women Executive mission team to begin our conference endeavor. Each of you are invited to consider, as these "conversations" begin, attending the "A Way Forward Conversation" that may be hosted within your District.

Thank you for your consideration as we begin to engage this "Hope" for the church.

Debbie Bell, President 2017-2018

Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Women



Gifts to the Legacy Fund can be made in several ways:

- Online at unitedmethodistwomen.org/legacyfund
- **By phone: 800-278-7771** (8 am-6pm EST, M-F)
- **Text Legacy150 to 41444**
- **By check: note "Legacy Fund"** in memo and mail to: United Methodist Women: Treasurer's Office 15th Floor 475 Riverside Drive New York, NY 10115.

A SCHOLARSHIP IS AVAILABLE FOR THE 2018 ASSEMBLY! ACT NOW !

All, if you are aware of ANY Native American UMW member from our conference in your districts and is interested in attending Assembly 2018, please submit their name about this "partial" scholarship. Please, Do not respond back if you DO NOT know of any that qualify, ONLY if you have a interested member that is Native American that wants to request consideration for a partial scholarship to Assembly 2018 in Columbus, OH.

To apply for the scholarship, please submit the attached form to Sophony Lamour at SLamour@unitedmethodistwomen.org by Feb. 15, 2018. Applications will be considered on a first come basis.



LDD
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI
NOVEMBER 10-12, 2017

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

Claire Esther, Pat Dodge, Debbie Bush, Debbie Bracewell, Sally Ozan, Joan Simmons, Debbie Bell, and Geri Stiffler



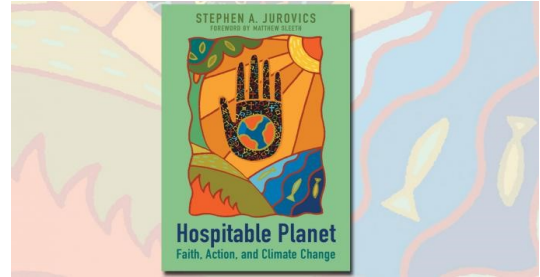
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DAYS NATIONAL OFFICE OF UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

CARES AND CONCERNS

Winn Marsh is appointed Personal Concerns Coordinator for Alabama-West Florida Conference United Methodist Women. You may contact her at winnmarsh@aol.com or 850-624-9709 to request prayer for your personal concerns. Winn will share the information according to your wishes.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

HOSPITABLE PLANET

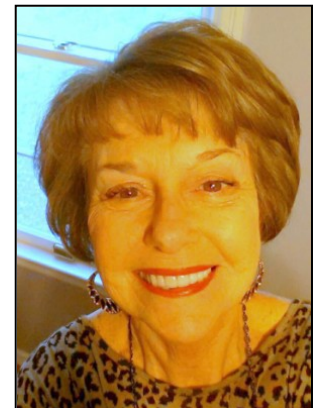


[The UMW 2018 Reading Program ordering guide](#) calls Jurovics' book "an important work of witness and states that faith and connection to God should lead us to save and heal our planet from a looming environmental catastrophe." Jurovics, who is Jewish, has been speaking at churches and synagogues about the connection between religion and the environment since the late 1980s.

While other books that address climate change from a religious perspective offer recommendations for individual change, Jurovics is thinking in much broader terms. "We need to transform our society," he declared. Actually, he is advocating for a faith-based environmental rights movement similar to the civil rights movement. "This is a call to action," he said. "You can't just duck this issue and try to lecture people about what's moral and what's not

Climate change will have many effects on our planet, some of which are contrary to biblical teachings, Jurovics noted. "Since we bear responsibility for the emissions of greenhouse gases, we bear responsibility for their effects," he told UMNS. "That's how climate change becomes a religious issue as well as an environmental one for the faithful." Interfaith organizations have been sounding the call for advocacy for some time, but he believes such groups need to become more visible. [GreenFaith](#) founded in 1992 as Partners for Environmental Quality by Jewish and Christian leaders, is one example of a faith-based advocacy and educational organization; [Interfaith Power and Light](#), which focuses on global warming, is another. To get his book's message across, Jurovics has spoken at about two dozen churches in the past year. The United Methodist North Carolina Conference has invited him to be a part of its creation care team, he added. "I think one of the major charges for that committee is how to encourage local pastors to take up climate change as an issue."

**GET YOUR 2018 READING BOOKS AN PROGRAM
BOOKS AT ANNUAL DAY! MISSION STUDY BOOKS
WILL ALSO BE MADE AVAIABLE OR YOU CAN
ORDER ANY BOOK THAT YOU WANT. SUPPORT
THE 2018 READING PROGRAM!**



Sally Ozan
Secretary of Program Resources



response:
the magazine of women in mission!



EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION REPORT

By the time you read this edition of the ALERT, we will be in the midst of the holiday season. As I write this, Thanksgiving is approaching, and the season of Advent is not far behind it. All our reports will be in for 2017, and we will be beginning to think about the New Year. As we head into 2018, we will start activities and meetings that will give us some new study topics, new members, and new reporting forms! I know it seems that we stress reports a lot, but it is one way we keep on the right track with what we are supposed to be doing in promoting faith, hope and love in action for our focus on women, children and youth. I have chosen to highlight Pledge to Mission as it is stated in our United Methodist Women's Workbook.

Meeting our Pledge to Mission is one of the items on our Mission Today form. If we don't meet that amount that we stated, we do not get to count that item as a number toward our desired status of being a Gold, Bronze, or Silver Unit at the end of the year. The categories that make up the Pledge to Mission include the following:

1. Pledges of members
2. Gifts and offerings
3. Money from fundraising events
4. Special Mission Recognitions (pins)
5. Gifts to Mission (cards purchased from the District Treasurer)
6. Gifts in Memory
7. The World Thank Offering (spontaneous thanks for God's gifts to us)

All of the above can be counted in our Pledge to Mission. It is not simply our member pledges; there has been some confusion regarding this. This list can be found on page 5 in the workbook which is on the conference website (<http://www.awf-umw.org>), if you cannot locate a copy of the workbook.

May you each have blessed Advent and Christmas Seasons and a Very Happy New Year.

Peace,

Shirley Hodges

Education & Interpretation Coordinator



RESPONSE TO THE CALL: SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTION LEGACY FUND CHALLENGE

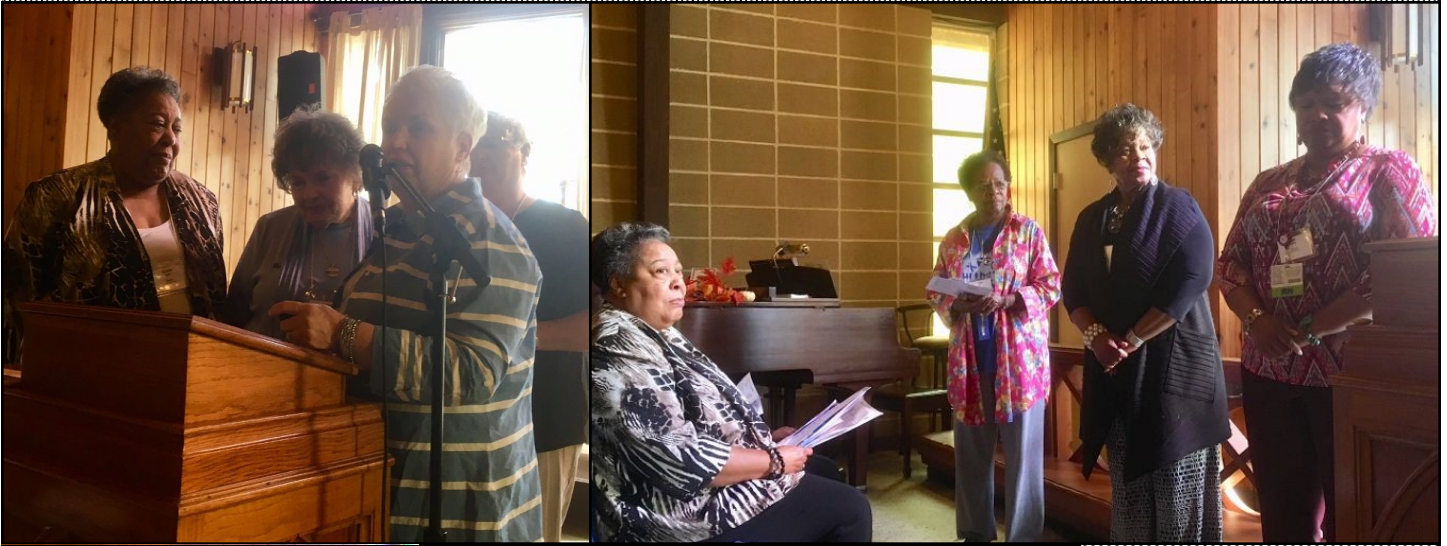
THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

During our Spiritual Enrichment Retreat I put out a call for help us reach the Southeastern Jurisdiction Legacy \$20,000 Fund Challenge. Each of the nine members of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Planning Team is responsible for raising \$2,222.22. Donations were requested to help me fulfill my portion of the \$20,000. The ladies in attendance at Spiritual Enrichment Retreat stepped up and gave a total of \$1065.83! **WOW!** Thank you so much for your wonderful generosity. Truly I am blessed to be a member of the Alabama West Florida Conference United Methodist Women. Blessings & Peace

Betty Helms

Southeastern Jurisdiction President

MEMORIES OF CONFERENCE SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT RETREAT @ BLUE LAKE



F
A
I
T
H





S
E
R



2
0
1
7

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR REPORT

YOU CAN BECOME INFORMED OF ALL OF THE ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES BY SUBSCRIBING TO THE ALERT TODAY!

- To receive a copy of the ALERT in the mail, please send in your Name, Address and Telephone Number to Debbie Bush. Enclose a \$4.00 check made payable to: ***Alabama-West Florida Conference United Methodist Women.***
- You may receive a copy of the ALERT free by email. Please email Debbie Bush with your request at: **Savannahgirl2759@gmail.com** and you will be added to our email list.
- There will be a table set up at Annual Day at Foley UMC on February 23rd & 24th. You will have an opportunity to leave your email address to receive the ALERT or you can leave the \$4 needed to mail out an ALERT Newsletter four (4) times throughout the year.



ALERT

STAY INFORMED

Debbie Bush, *Conference Communications Coordinator*

SPEAKERS FOR UNITED METHODIST WOMEN ASSEMBLY

Leymah Gbowee received the **Nobel Peace Prize** in 2011 for her work in leading a women's peace movement that brought an end to the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003. Ms. Gbowee shared the prize with Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Yemen native Tawakkol Karman. Ms. Gbowee and President Sirleaf became the second and third African women to win the prize, preceded by the late Wangari Maathai of Kenya. Ms. Gbowee is the founder and president of Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa based in Liberia. Her foundation provides educational and leadership opportunities to girls, women and youth in West Africa.

Michelle Alexander is author of the critically acclaimed "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness," a stunning account of millions of African Americans imprisoned and then relegated to a permanent second-class citizenship and legally denied enfranchisements won in the Civil Rights Movement. A legal scholar and civil rights litigator, Ms. Alexander has taught at a number of universities, including Stanford Law School, where she was an associate professor of law and director of its Civil Rights Clinics. In 2005, she accepted a joint appointment at the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity and the Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University. Ms. Alexander has been featured in numerous national radio and television outlets, including NPR, C-Span, Washington Journal and Bill Moyers Journal. "The New Jim Crow" is a 2011 NAACP Image Award winner. She was a featured academic in the Academy Award nominated documentary "13th," exploring systemic racism and the prison pipeline.

"The Power of Bold" will be the theme of the 19th quadrennial Assembly of United Methodist Women in Columbus, Ohio, May 18-20, 2018. Learn more at <https://umwassembly.org/news/>

United Methodist Women
Alabama-West Florida Conference
Debbie Bush,
Communications Coordinator

Save the Date for 2018!

January 20	COSROW	Blue Lake
February 23-24	Annual Day	Foley United Methodist Church, Foley, Alabama
May 18-20	Assembly	Columbus, Ohio
July 20-21	Mission u	St. Luke United Methodist Church, Pensacola, Florida
October 19-21	Spiritual Enrichment Retreat	Blue Lake