



United
Methodist
Women
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

The Informer

Mobile District United Methodist Women Newsletter
SPRING, 2021

From Our President

Hello All!

Ladies the first quarter of 2021 has flown by! We have been busy as a district trying to get back to normal. The District held Annual Day 2021 in person and on Zoom, we had a mission study on May 8 in person and via Zoom. WOW! To say i am excited is an understatement. We now need to focus on continuing our efforts to help women, children, and youth.

The United Methodist Women, national president 'Ainise 'Isama'u shared with the United Methodist Board of Directors that, ". . . we are intent on answering God's call to advocate, serve and respond in faith, even in the face of today's obstacles." Our district has always been diligent in helping the marginalized. We must continue, now more than ever. Our world is different from our grandmothers' world We can physically travel to areas about which our grandmothers only dreamed. We have opportunities to work outside the home. We have friends in social circles that our grandmothers never had. Our grandmothers paved the way for us to have these opportunities beginning over 150 years ago. It is our time now to continue to this legacy. We must do this for our grandchildren.

I want to thank you all for the support you have given me. We will make 2021 a year to remember. I will close with words from 'Ainise Isama'u *"Be bold in your space. Be bold wherever you go. We are here, and we are not going anywhere."*

Serving you through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

Michele Smith

President 2021-2022
Mobile District United Methodist Women

MOBILE DISTRICT MISSION TEAM 2021

President
Michele Smith

Vice President
Gail Bradford

Secretary
Marcie McNeal

Treasurer
Sally Pehler

Communications
Susan McRae

Mission Coordinators

Education and Interpretation
Sylvia McCaskill

Membership Nurture &
Outreach
Robbie Bunkley

Social Action
Karen Hazen

Spiritual Growth
Ginger Sorenson

Registrar
Mary Presley

Historian
Shirley Bryan

Parliamentarian
Sylvia McCaskill

Committee on Nominations
Co-Chairs
Sharon Hyland
Judy Burnham



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From Our Secretary

Hello to All Unit Secretaries!

I would like to formally introduce myself as your District UMW Secretary. My name is Marcie McNeal. I'm a member of St. John UMC where I attend with my husband of 21 years and our three children, Myles (27), Alexis (20), and Jordan (17 and $\frac{1}{2}$, because that's important when you're the baby of the family!)

I work for the Mobile County Public School System in the Information Technology department. That being said, I'm not a 'tech expert' but I can probably direct you to someone who is! I grew up as a military dependent, in Idaho, Colorado, Alaska, and Oklahoma, finally settling back in Alabama where my parents met and started this journey at Montgomery AFB.

I'm excited to serve as your District Secretary and although I'm not as experienced, probably, as most of you, I'm eager to learn and flexible to work with it. Please feel free to contact me with any matter that I can be of assistance with. I'm here to help with anything your unit may need.

Thank you for your service and commitment to the mission of UMW!

Marcie McNeal
Secretary 2021-22
Mobile District United Methodist Women

From Our Treasurer

I hope this finds you all drying out from all of the spring showers!! We do have some beautiful May flowers!! The wonderful spring that we have had is the perfect visual example that our Lord is near!!

Hopefully we will see more and more 'in person' events in 2021. We have had two in-person District events thus far this year, and several unit events or meetings. The UMCOR 'kit-making' activity usually scheduled in May at Christ United as a district event took place on May 15th as a unit event. All items for the kits have been purchased, so members will only be putting the kits together and sending on to UMCOR.

If your unit would like to make its usual donation to UMCOR, please send it directly to them; however, I would love to be able to report what our District gives, so a quick call, email, or text would be greatly appreciated. All other money needs to be sent directly to me and I will report for our district and send on to conference and national offices.

The Five Channels of Mission Giving

-1-

Pledge to Mission

-2-

Special Recognition

-3-

Gift to Mission

-4-

Gift in Memory

-5-

World Thank Offering



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As of May 10th, we have a little over \$4,600 of our \$20,000 total pledge that has been fulfilled. With the first quarter of the year behind us, 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.

“Giving is not just about making a donation, it’s about making a difference.”

Should you ever need my assistance, please call, text or email.

Sally Pehler
251-490-4717
s.pehler@comcast.net
Treasurer, 2021-22
Mobile District United Methodist Women

Education and Interpretation

Learning Together for the Transformation of the World

Virtual (online) Events: July 22-24, 2021

Each year, United Methodist Women prepare for faithful living and action by participating in Mission u, a transformative education program that offers study on biblically grounded curricula. These curricula are intended to motivate, inform and enrich our commitment to be in ministry for a more just and equitable world, locally and globally.

Mission u is open to all UMW members, laity, clergy and anyone interested and is organized at the Conference level by United Methodist Women and the Conference Board of Church & Society. In our Alabama-West Florida conference, each course is taught in one day with three-hours of study in the morning and three hours in the afternoon. There are additional worship and plenary sessions included.

On your registration form, you may select one course for Friday and one course for Saturday or select one course for either day. Each teacher (or team for the Pushout study) listed will teach the complete course on Friday and again on Saturday to a different group of students. You will choose which course(s) you wish to take but not the instructor. If you wish to request a specific instructor, you will need to make your request in writing to Betty Helms, Mission u registrar. Her contact information is on the registration form and on the online registration at awf-umw.org.

Cost is \$10 for registration for the entire Mission u and \$15 for each study

To download the Reading Program information use:
<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/readingprogramcatalog2021.pdf>



Subscribe to Faith Talks at
<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks>

Faith Talks

A UNITED METHODIST WOMEN PODCAST



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book. The book(s) will be mailed to you. If you prefer, you may purchase your own study books on Kindle and then register. *If no books are needed, please print and use the paper, Mail-in Registration Form and mark either One day Study, no book, or Both day studies, no book. Then select the appropriate day and study.*

During the registration process, you may also make a donation that will go to the Equal Justice Initiative (Montgomery, AL) for criminal justice reform.

Please Note: Your ID for your specific class(es) will be emailed to you after the July 12th registration deadline. Please keep this email as it is your personal link to all your virtual events and can't be resent.

Submitted by Joyce Genz
Education and Interpretation, 2021-22
Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Women
In lieu of Mobile District UMW submission

AWF-UMW Mission u

There's Far More Here

THAN MEETS THE EYE

So we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without [God's] unfolding grace. [...] There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever.

2 Corinthians

4:16-18, The Message

We have known and felt what it is like when "things are falling apart on us." We have experienced a great unraveling that has shifted, quite literally, everything.

Could there be, as 2 Corinthians put it, "far more here than meets the eye"?

Mission u, like many activities in our lives, has moved online. While virtual, we are still creating spaces for spiritual community, lifelong friendships, lessons that change us and our communities, and spiritual practices that arrive when we need them most. In a time when it looks like things are falling apart on us, God's grace is still unfolding and life is being made new.

Indeed: There's far more here than meets the eye. *Will you join us?*

At our upcoming **Mission u** (produced in cooperation with GNTV), we will examine anxiety, the culture of violence that impacts children in and out of schools, and how we as God's people can deepen our moral witness and respond faithfully.

Our 2021 **Mission u** will offer the following studies (you may take one class Friday and one



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Saturday)

- [Finding Peace in an Anxious World](#), edited by Erin James-Brown; taught by Celeste Eubanks and Debbie Bracewell
- [Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools](#) by Monique Morris; taught by Zan Jones/Brenda Boman and Clara Ester/Kim Sanders
- [Bearing Witness in the Kin-dom: Living into the Church's Moral Witness Through Radical Discipleship](#) by Darryl W. Stephens; taught by Joyce Genz and Judith Pierre-Okerson

Join us: Online July 22-24, 2021 (*must register by July 12*). Opening Worship is Thursday, July 22, 6:30-7:30 pm. Studies are July 23 & 24, 8:30 am-5:00 pm, including opening, breaks & plenaries. Continuing Education Credit is available. All donations will be given to the Equal Justice Initiative (Montgomery, AL).

Register: <https://www.awf-umw.org/> or [mail in form](#) to AWF-UMW Mission u, 3043 Headland Avenue, Dothan, AL 36303. Registration cost is \$10 plus \$15 per class (study book is included in class fee). Total cost for all sessions is \$40. A link will be sent to you after registration is completed to join the online sessions in real time. If books are purchased for e-reader or already available, register via the mail-in form only for \$10 for the entire Mission u.

Spiritual Growth

To my UMW sisters.

Over the last month I have really been encouraged with all of the vaccinations that have come out for the Covid 19 virus.

I believe this would have not come about but for the fact our churches and our sister UMW groups did not give up on praying for a miracle. I truly believe this was a miracle from God.

We need to remember those in prayer who have not had the vaccination and pray that is provided to them.

This is an encouraging sign for us to be able to meet again in person; I have missed that so much. Hopefully we will be able to meet with little restrictions.

I believe my favorite book in the Bible is Philippians. I am reminded of my Mother's favorite verse, **"For I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength."** Philippians 4:13 (New Living Translation) Reading further in Philippians, **"And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus."** Philippians 4:19

Let us continue to pray for all our leaders - Federal, State and City - to continue to guide in what we hope will be a better time for our country.

Prayers and Blessing to my Sisters in Christ.

Ginger Sorenson
Spiritual Action Mission Coordinator 2020-21
Mobile District United Methodist Women



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Social Action

The Sager Brown legacy began in 1867 with the purchase of the Byrne Sugar Plantation in Baldwin, Louisiana, for \$13,000, for the purpose of housing and educating orphaned African-American children after the Civil War. In 1875, the orphanage was re-imagined under the auspices of the Mississippi Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Reverend Dr. William D. Godman transformed “The Orphan’s Home” into an elite liberal arts school for African-American children, and gathered together a school choir called the Jubilee Singers, with whom he toured the northern U.S. While on tour, the choir caught the ears and imaginations of Mrs. Addie Sager and Mrs. C.W.M. Brown, who purchased the Godman School in 1921 for the predecessors to the United Methodist’s Women’s Division, and moved the school/orphanage to New Orleans.

The school/orphanage was then known as the Sager Brown Orphanage and Godman School, and it remained open until 1978, when it was forced to close due to financial hardships.

The legacy of Sager Brown still retains the ability to touch hearts and bring together workers to be the hands and feet of Christ.

The Methodist Committee on Overseas Relief (MCOB) was founded in 1940 by the Bishop Herbert Welch in response to displaced and vulnerable populations in the wake of World War II. It was to be a “voice of conscience among Methodists to act in the relief of human suffering without distinction of race, color, or creed.” This mandate remains true to this day.

In the 1950’s and 1960’s MCOB worked to resettle refugees and address the root causes of hunger and poverty. The organization’s name was legally changed to The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) at the 1972 General Conference. By the 1980’s UMCOR’s was showing God’s love in nearly 100 countries on five continents.

In 1992, Hurricane Andrew devastated southern Louisiana. Through UMCOR, the United Methodist Church began to collect emergency relief for the area, and they bought the vacant Sager-Brown school to use as their coordination center. There, volunteers helped assemble relief supply kits and distribute much needed essentials items. Thus, UMCOR Sager-Brown came to be.

The UMCOR Sager Brown Depot is now connected to 2,500 to 3,000 people who stay here annually. Twenty different states last year benefited from the kits assembled there. Fifty-seven different countries and 5.3 million people were reached last year through the ministry at UMCOR.

PRAYER: Loving God, you call us to love your children. Thank you for the health and welfare ministries and institutions that our gifts support. Amen.

Submitted by Karen Hazen
Social Action Mission Coordinator 2020-21
Mobile District United Methodist Women

ANNUAL DAY MEMORIES



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In spite of the rain, a beautiful Mobile District Annual Day was held at Kingswood UMC on Saturday, March 25, our first in-person gathering in a year! The Kingswood United Methodist Women unit created a safe, welcoming, and accommodating environment as we joyously greeted ladies that we had missed for so long.

Highlighting this day, our spirited speaker, Deaconess Celeste Eubanks brought us a message of **"HOPE, Joy, Peace, TRUST, and Power"** Romans 15: 5-6 (NIV); a message that we all can relate to, and is especially needed during this time of uncertainty and change in the world.

Ms. Eubanks' remarks reminded us that the words HOPE and TRUST, when intertwined, bring us God's gifts. "We have HOPE for our future when we TRUST in God – knowing God is giving us the gifts of ENDURANCE and ENCOURAGEMENT." This past year has been full of unknowns, which leads to feelings of fear and tends to bring one's mood down. Ms. Eubanks admitted she too suffered the weariness of not knowing the future, but reminded us "as believers in Jesus Christ, we had HOPE for the future. Through all of these times of uncertainty we held on to our HOPE in God." Recalling the scripture Proverbs 3:5-6: *"TRUST in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."* She shared how, as Christians, it is important to live into this scripture. She explained her way of living into this scripture was to create a vision board – something she was never a fan of, but for the first time in her life decided to create. Though she had doubts, she truly felt God was leading her to do this and spent many long, restless nights fighting it. Finally, her solution – "Trust and don't doubt. Trust and don't doubt." Saying this over and over in her mind settled her spirit. This act also helped her to quit overthinking about what she wanted to write and to do as Jesus told Thomas, *"Do not doubt but believe."* She goes on to explain how many of her vision board posts came to life. Without her trying to manage what she wanted, things began to unfold; her TRUST in God led her HOPES to appear.

This is not as easy as it seems. She knew that we can be skeptical, especially after dealing with the burdens from 2020 and into 2021; and she gave some advice to conquering those down-spiraling moods. "I know you're saying you just don't have it in you . . . Maybe you're simply drained from all the stress, weariness, and anxiety. You're wondering, "How do I keep going forward? How can I have HOPE for the future? Look back at Romans 15:5 *"May the God who gives ENDURANCE and ENCOURAGEMENT... – that's how you have HOPE for the future. That's how you keep going forward."* She went on to explain how these two things can uplift and enlighten us. "Endurance is defined as the fact or power of enduring an unpleasant or difficult process or situation without giving way; the capacity of something to last or to withstand wear and tear. The root word "endure" means to suffer patiently; remain in existence – last."

As we sat, albeit in masks, we were together, a "hope" we had from having socially distanced for a year. Our hope gave to "trust" God as we gathered in faith that everyone would be safe. Thank you again Ms. Eubanks for "encouraging" us on how God is working through it all and thanks to our Annual Day committee for "enduring" the wait to bring us a wonderful event!

Submitted by Marcie McNeal
Secretary, 2021-22
Mobile District United Methodist Women



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CELEBRATING THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE UNITS WITHIN THE MOBILE DISTRICT, THE FOLLOWING WERE NOTED FOR 2020:

5 STAR UNITS (5 Channels of Mission Giving)

Christ	Citronelle	Kingswood	New Hope
New Life	Pine Grove	South Brookley	St John
St Mark	Theodore	Theodore First	Toulminville-Warren Street

Charter for Racial Justice

Christ	Citronelle	Kingswood
New Hope	South Brookley	St John
Toulminville-Warren Street		

Mission Studies 2020

<i>Finding Peace in an Anxious World</i>	Christ	South Brookley
<i>School to Prison Pipeline</i>	Toulminville-Warren Street	

Mission Today Units

<u>GOLD</u>	Christ	South Brookley	Toulminville-Warren Street
<u>SILVER</u>	Citronelle		
<u>BRONZE</u>	Kingswood	St John	
<u>PARTICIPATING</u>	New Hope	New Life	Saraland Theodore

READING PROGRAM

Christ – 7 completed a plan + 24 additional participants
 Citronelle – 3 completed a plan + 2 additional participants
 Kingswood – 7 participants
 New Hope – 7 participants
 South Brookley – 1 participant
 St. John – 3 participants
 Theodore – 1 completed a plan
 Toulminville-Warren Street – 5 completed a plan + 10 additional participants

Gail Bradford
 Vice President 2020-21
 Mobile District United Methodist Women

Membership, Nurture and Outreach

In Memory of Those Faithful Women Who Gained Heaven in 2020

Christ United Methodist Women

Mary Applegate was always smiling and was active in the Esther Circle. When able to attend circle meetings she was so friendly and always fashionably attired. She will be missed.

Grand Bay United Methodist Women

Claudine Ott had been a member of Grand Bay UMC since 1963 and always supported church



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functions as well as the work of United Methodist Women.

Mary Elkins Mary was also very active in the church and United Methodist Women. Before her passing, she moved to North Carolina to be near her family.

Kingswood UMC United Methodist Women

Dean Brown and her husband were founding members of Forest Hill UMC which later merged with Kingswood. She loved to help and was a very active member and officer in the Dorcas Circle, faithfully serving always.

St. John UMC United Methodist Women

Sylvia Sipp Reese was a good worker in her United Methodist Women unit and in the church. She loved everybody and she loved to read.

St. Mark UMC United Methodist Women

Barbara Manley moved to Mobile to stay with her sister Janette. She loved meeting people and became very active and helpful in her United Methodist Women unit. Barbara loved and supported missions. In addition, she created flower arrangements when needed at the church.

South Brookley UMC United Methodist Women

Deborah Turner was a member of United Methodist Women for over ten years. She was very active and always participated in meetings, fundraising dinners and the huge bazaar held before Christmas annually. She was an asset to our circle and we miss her so much.

Theodore UMC United Methodist Women

Barbara Kirkland and **Jean French** were close friends and dedicated workers, usually working side-by-side. Jean was a long time member of the church and a church officer. When she was asked to do something, she did it well.

Submitted by
Robbie Bunkley
Membership, Nurture and Outreach
Mobile District United Methodist Women

Continuing the Race

When running a relay race, it is important to have a new runner ready so that the baton can be transferred and the race continued. The new runner must not only be prepared to accept the baton, but also be enthusiastic and excited. And the smoother the transfer, the better the race.

The same is true for our Mobile District UMW. As officers complete their term of office, new officers need to be prepared, enthusiastic and excited to step into the role. We know from Scripture that God has equipped us with different gifts for service. And there are a variety of roles in our organization.

The Nominating Committee is tasked with helping to identify individuals with the gifts and enthusiasm needed to fulfill these roles. One of the tools used for this process is the Talent Bank form. Attached is a copy of the Talent Bank form. Please share it with other potential leaders, complete and send it to Judy Burnham, burnham@comcast.net or 3726 Bay Front Rd, Mobile, AL 36605.

Together we will pass the baton to continue the race. To God be the glory!

Submitted by Judy Burnham



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Nominating Committee, Class of 2022
Mobile District United Methodist Women

HELP OFFERED

At Mobile's St. John UMC on Overlook Rd, Thrift Hut sales on the first of every month have not yet restarted. As soon as reopening is set, the word will be spread! If anyone is in need, St. John's will be glad to serve them and donations are still being accepted. Call Carolyn Brown at 251-367-6276

St. John's UMC is hosting a **Drive-In Vaccine Clinic** in conjunction with USA and The City of Mobile to be held on Saturday, May 22, 2021 from 8 AM-12 Noon. For further information call Carolyn Brown at 251-367-6276.

If anyone is in need of food, call Carolyn Brown at 251-367-6276 to find out where this help is offered.

If anyone is interested in ESL (**E**nglish as a **S**econd **L**anguage) classes, please call Esme Quijada at 251-287-4012 or Carolyn Brown at 251-367-6276. Classes are held at St John UMC on Overlook Rd on Fridays at 7 PM.

Submitted by
Carolyn Brown
251-367-6276

Nominating Committee, Class of 2022
Mobile District United Methodist Women



ALABAMA WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE MOBILE DISTRICT UNITED METHODIST WOMEN 2021 DISTRICT AND CONFERENCE CALENDAR

January 15-16	Executive Team Meeting XTeam Officers & District Presidents	Enterprise UMC via Zoom	6:30 PM
January 23	District Mission Team Meeting	South Brookley UMC	10:00 AM



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January 28-30	Leadership Development Days	New Conference Officers	
February 27	District Officers Training	Via Zoom	10:00 AM
March 6	Conference Annual Day	Via Zoom	9:00 AM
March 20	District Annual Day	In-person or Via Zoom Hosted by Kingswood UMW	10:00 AM
May 8	District Mission Study	South Brookley UMC	10:00 AM-2:00 PM
May 15	UMCOR Workshop	District event canceled	
June 26	District Mission Team Meeting 2022 Budget Meeting	South Brookley UMC	10:00 AM
July 10	Executive Team Meeting X Team Officers, District Presidents & District Treasurers 2022 District Budget Reviews	Christ UMC/Zoom	8:00 AM
July 23-24	Cooperative Mission u	Virtual	Schedule Pending
August 14	District Mission Study	Pending	10:00 AM-2:00 PM
October 8-9	Conference Spiritual Enrichment Retreat	Blue Lake Assembly Grounds Friday 3:00 PM check-in or Saturday 7:00 am check-in	
October 23	District Spiritual Enrichment Day	Pending	10:00 AM
November 14	UMW DAY	ALL LOCAL UNITS CELEBRATE	
November 20	District Mission Team Meeting	South Brookley UMC	10:00 AM
June 6-9	AWFC ANNUAL CONFERENCE LOCATION TBA Attendees: AWF-UMW President & District Presidents as Voting Delegates		