

Circuit Writer

AUGUST 2020

CONFERENCE:

FIND DETAILS HERE:

awf-umw.org

(Since COVID 19 has caused schedules to change for all of us, please check the website above and your emails often for updates.)



DISTRICT:

2021 District Annual Day
MARIANNA FIRST
Tentative Date:
March 5-6

Next *Circuit Writer*
Deadline:

NOV. 1, 2020

Editor: **Deanie DeFelix**
deanie575@gmail.com



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: We CAN Survive!

You've surely heard, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going!" As motivating as this idea is, I'm finding my tenacity sorely challenged by the frustration of wanting to get going but being restrained by health concerns in every direction. Every organization with which I'm affiliated is experiencing the same frustration of having worthy service projects and events postponed / canceled because of the seemingly endless pause we are trying to outlast.

As we look for viable ways to continue our mission work through United Methodist Women, some of us are learning to use the Zoom platform to conduct UMW meetings safely from home (if we are blessed with decent internet connections). Although our technologically advanced world offers several options to help us stay connected and informed, many of us simply have been content to leave those options to the younger generations. What little technology we do try to use can bring so much frustration in the learning process that we quickly throw our hands up in desperation when we can't master the task right away.

Finding ourselves more isolated from our friends and family by this pandemic, we are facing some tough realities: we're losing loved ones far too soon; we're staying away from funerals and weddings despite our deep urge to give sympathetic or congratulatory hugs; we're seeing or dealing with economic struggles all around us. Yes, we're tempted to go into a frenzy of handwringing, crying out, "What in this world are we going to do? How can we survive this doom and gloom?"

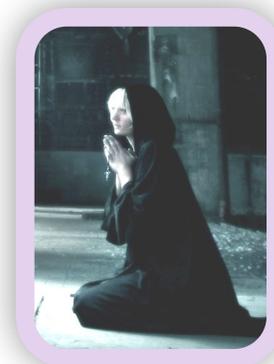
In the words of one of my favorite hymns, we can survive if we "Count [our] blessings, name them one by one." Remember that our Heavenly Father is the same Red-Sea-parting Yahweh, God of love and protection for His children that He has always been. We sang "God Will Take Care of You" at the close of a recent worship service, such uplifting words to carry with us in our daily efforts to survive. We must never forget that His Spirit is with us always and that our prayers for each other can help us survive in His service,

Deanie DeFelix

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will *heal their land.*" (II CHRONICLES 7:14)



Deanie DeFelix





From the Secretary's Pen

Janis Johnson



When I wrote the article for the May 2020 issue of the *Circuit Writer* and described the situation that existed then, I was confident all would be better by now. Guess what? I was totally wrong. If anything, in our part of the state of Florida, we are worse off. Back then, the Covid-19 Virus was affecting people in other areas, and we were trying to be vigilant that it didn't become too serious in our immediate area. But now, there have been a few deaths and many people that we know personally have become ill with the virus. The reality of its seriousness has become all too clear.

My home church, Bonifay First United Methodist Church, began live feed worship in March through the medium of Facebook. We hoped to transition to in-person worship by the first of June. Again, that didn't happen. Instead, we began an experiment to worship on the church lawn, with strict guidelines for social distancing, wearing masks, using hand sanitizer and other precautions to protect those who attended. It was amazing to see how God provided the people and resources needed to make this happen. One person had the sound and media equipment to enable worship outdoors and broadcast the live feed service at the same time. What a blessing! Others provided the manpower to set-up and assist in helping attendees find appropriate seating at a safe distance from other families. Musicians volunteered to come early to practice and lead the hymns during the service, again maintaining safe boundaries from each other. Masks were worn during arrival and departure by everyone. Handheld equipment was thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between uses, and there was no sharing of various items used in the service.

There was uncertainty about how many would attend the lawn-chair, outdoor worship, especially since the live feed worship was continuing. Letters and emails were sent out to inform those who wanted to attend of the requirements and procedures so there would be no misunderstanding. In the middle of this time, there was a change in Pastoral appointments, so that created another opportunity for flexibility and creativity, as well as lay leadership! Again, God provided and those obstacles were overcome.

The response has been positive. Since we worship at 8:30, there is usually a slight breeze to offset some of the heat. If a service had to be cancelled due to weather or other circumstances, folks were notified through social media. Worshipping God in the outdoors, looking up into the beautiful blue sky, seeing birds fly above and hearing them tweeting, breathing in the fresh air, being able to see Christian brothers and sisters in a safe manner, and hearing God's word and singing his praises in the sanctuary He created has been a wonderful experience. One person suggested we do this occasionally even when we can worship inside our church. Our pastor reminded us in a recent sermon that this is the way our Christian ancestors worshipped; furthermore, many continue to worship this way today. This time has helped many realize that worshipping God requires nothing but our attention and focus on Him as our creator, redeemer, and salvation, *not* any of the extraneous things we have added and often think of as necessities.

Covid-19 has taught us many things: don't take blessings for granted; learn to be flexible; appreciate the little things; enjoy times with loved ones in new ways; God is still in control; we are totally dependent on Him; He is our source of strength, comfort, and hope. This pandemic, too, shall pass, and it is our fervent prayer that we will be stronger, more loving, grateful, and gracious when it is over.



Janis

Spiritual Growth

Martha Spiva



MARTHA'S CHALLENGE: WALK IN THE LIGHT

Many of us feel as if we are being assaulted from the darkness with an incessant stream of fiery arrows from all directions. Before we could recover/rebuild fully from the hurricane, we now find ourselves trying to survive the Corona virus threat. Each day seems to bring longer, darker shadows as we learn about the widespread impact of this terrible pandemic. In dealing with our daily struggle to remain healthy, our concerns deepen when we lose loved ones or even experience symptoms of depression because of so many sad reports from various outbreaks. We can empathize to a greater extent with Job's suffering when he seemed to lose everything that mattered to him. Let's not forget, though, that all is not dark; our unwavering faith in the Light of the world *will* help us prevail.

Consider these words from I John 1:

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (ESV)

In these days of isolation, how can fellowship with one another be possible? Again, John tells us,

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? (I John 3:17, ESV)

Are we not still able to donate food, clothing, or money to charitable organizations, starting with our own church and United Methodist Women programs? Can we not find ways to communicate with shut-ins and nursing home residents (snail mail is still available)? What about leading our church members in car parades to uplift community members (we all need some cheering up)?

When we see the evidence of hate spreading in our dark world, are we to sit idly and watch when we have the Light within us to dispel such evil encroachment? John offers a straightforward answer in I John 4:20, ESV:

If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

What are we doing to help others who are truly in need of life's immediate necessities? But even more important to ask, are we offering God's light to our dark world?

May you walk in the Light and be "In His Service" always,

Martha

Tidbits from the Treasurer

Peggy Pelt



Hi, Ladies,

Here are the contributions I have received thus far.

*Pledges	\$2,625.75
*Gift to Mission	\$10.00
*Gift in Memory	\$75.00
*World Thank Offering	\$224.90
*Special Recognition Pins	\$240.00
Prayer and Self-Denial	\$706.00
Conference Love Offering	\$1,015.00
Legacy	\$200.00
UMCOR	\$300.00

*These five types of donations apply to our District Pledge and total \$3,175.65. Our 2020 District Pledge is \$11,000. Obviously, we have a way to go to meet this goal. An average donation of \$34 per member (less than \$3 per month) would achieve this amount.

I always seems to be asking for contributions during difficult times. Last year it was after Hurricane Michael; this year we're dealing with Covid -19. I realize many units have been unable to meet at all this year. However, if you can contact your members and ask for donations, the United Methodist Women will be able to continue to meet the needs of women and children who depend on us.

Please keep **Praying** and **Stay Safe** In Christ's Service,

Peggy

“So, what do I need to pledge, again?”

“Well, Peggy said the amount each member pledges is up to the member, or optional, **but** we can reach our district goal of \$11,000 if each of us will pledge at least **\$34**. And don't forget to **ADD** the Love Offering or Conference Asking amount of **\$10**.”

“All these numbers are giving me a headache! I'm just going to write my check for \$50 and tell our treasurer that \$10 is for the Conference Love Offering. The remaining \$40 is my pledge to help United Methodist Women make a difference in the lives of needy women and children worldwide.”

“Yes, we do need to share with others when our cups are running over!”



SOCIAL ACTION and NOMINATIONS

Karen Fillman



Greetings Sisters from your Social Action Coordinator!



or



How are you dealing with quarantine/self-quarantine during this pandemic, which is forcing us to deal with wearing face masks and, sadly, with social distancing? But wait!!! God already knew about this and knows all about our fears and challenges with it. So He has challenged us, but we find we are able to deal with any problems. Remember, God does not promise us a problem-free life, but He has already equipped us with tools to deal with what life gives us!

We all have plenty of things happening in our church, and getting the information to us used to be fairly simple. Now that we are finding things are done differently, we certainly must be a bit more creative: **Life now in our somewhat closed church:** While we were all relieved to go back to attending church again, it didn't last long for some congregations! Thank goodness for all these Zoom Sunday school classes, online church, church emails, etc. to keep us connected. And the wonderful people who have taken up making Zoom videos of Christian talks and Zoom choirs are amazing! Yes, and God has an evolving hand in all this. God is also telling us to "Get out and greet your neighbor" (even though you must remain 6 feet away).

The face mask that we MUST wear can still tell all you meet about God's Love and concern ---- through your smile! They'll see it in your caring attitude and your eyes. God will make sure the message gets to them. Think back to the Parable of the Sower and the Seed. Recall the meaning? We 'sow the seed of God' in any way we can—the rest is up to God –SO?

What will people see under YOUR face mask today?
Blessings,

Karen Fillman

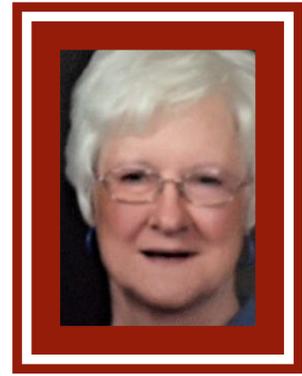
From your **Nominations Chair:**

How many ways can we politely say... "We NEED you!"
How does "S.O.S." or "HELP" come across to you?
Basically, we need your interest and action.
What exciting thing is God telling you to do?

You just might be getting a call soon...

PROGRAM RESOURCES and E & I

Elizabeth Bell



Ladies,

I don't know about you, but this has been one of the most difficult four months in my life!! My family is physically well, but we are missing so many of our ordinary activities. I'm doing chores like cleaning baseboards and sorting family pictures that I have put off for years – but I'm staying busy!!!

We are all looking forward to returning to see our Church Family in person. Nathan has done a wonderful job of sending out a weekly message and bulletin for the Sunday service. We welcome any of you to join us at fumcofmarianna.com. The service will come on Facebook Live at 8:55 with a beautiful organ/piano prelude, and the service begins at 9:00. We also have a drive-in service in the church parking lot at 11:00 where we can honk and wave to each other.

Our Wednesday Night Live with Nathan is also online at 5:15 on Wednesday evenings. We eat our supper as we would if we were at the church for a meal together.

I had three new books that I had ordered in early March for our UMW Reading Program, and I have circulated them among three or four of our members. Because our office building is not open, our members haven't been able to use the library for books. We will be back on schedule in a couple of months, I pray!

This poem, "Drinking from the Saucer" by John Paul Moore, expresses how I believe we should feel about our Christian lives – even during this pandemic:

I've never made a fortune and it's probably too late now.
But I don't worry about that much - I am happy anyhow.
And as I go along life's way, I'm reaping better than I sowed.
I'm drinking from my saucer because my cup has overflowed.

I haven't got a lot of riches, and sometimes the going's tough
But with kin and friends to love me, I think I am rich enough.
I thank God for the blessings, that His mercy has bestowed
I'm drinking from my saucer, because my cup has overflowed.

I remember times when things went wrong, my faith wore somewhat thin,
But all at once the dark clouds broke, and the sun peeped through again.
So God, help me not to gripe about the tough rows that I've hoed.
I'm drinking from my saucer, because my cup has overflowed.

God gives me strength and courage when the way grows steep and rough,
I'll not ask for other blessings, for I'm already blessed enough.
And may we never be too busy, to help bear another's load;
Then we'll all keep drinking from the saucer, because our cups have overflowed.



May we bless others in His service, *Elizabeth*

**MARIANNA—PANAMA CITY
DISTRICT ELECTIONS**

**SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2021
Presented by Nominations Chair Karen Fillman**

President	Deanie DeFelix
Vice President	Verna Roberts
Secretary	Janis Johnson
Treasurer	Peggy Pelt
Communications	Deanie DeFelix*
Nominations Chair <i>and</i> Social Action:	Karen Fillman*
Program Resources <i>and</i> Ed. and Interp:	Elizabeth Bell*
Membership, Nurture, & Outreach:	Kathy McQuagge
Spiritual Growth:	Martha Spiva
Historian (<i>appointed</i>)	Joann Stone

***If you would like to offer your talents in service to our district by taking one of the positions these ladies have agreed to fill until others are led to take them, please contact Karen Fillman.**

ADJUSTED ELECTION PROCEDURES DURING COVID PANDEMIC

In the absence of in-person meetings because of health concerns associated with the virus, our district elections will follow the procedures below:

- An updated ballot will be emailed (or mailed via USPS if requested) to each unit president as listed in the 2020 Marianna-Panama City District Directory. The official deadline for receipt of each unit's ballot is November 5, 2020.
- Unit presidents will email votes to the Chair of Nominations (Karen Fillman), copying to the President (Deanie DeFelix) and Secretary (Janis Johnson). Addresses will be provided in the letter of instructions that will accompany the ballot.
- An official vote record will be created to record and document votes.
- A complete record of the election results and the voting process will be maintained by the secretary and become a part of the district records.
- Results of the election will be sent to each voting member by email and will be published in the next district newsletter.
- Congratulatory letters will be mailed to each in-coming officer and chair, along with a brief overview of the duties expected of her position.



We hope to resume in-person meetings early in 2021 so we can install our officers and committee chairs, congratulate them, and pledge our support to them as our District Executive Team. Until then, continue to look for safe ways to fulfill the purpose of United Methodist Women. God has blessed us with technology to help us continue our work; let's rejoice that we are not alone as we find new ways to remain IN HIS SERVICE.



PURPOSE OF UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose PURPOSE is to know God and 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.

Encouragement from God's Holy Word

"He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." Deu. 31:8

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine." Isaiah 43:1

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love." I John 4:18

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through Him who gives me strength." Philippians 4:11-13

In the words of Jesus, **"I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."** John 16:33

The passages above are a few of the biblical references Pastor Mike Pearson took the time to send in an expression of hope and a call to fervent prayer to the members of Graceville FUMC. His call reminds us, "Therefore, our response to Covid, civil unrest, politics, and economy is faith in God, anticipation of what He is doing, and moving into a season of prayer."

If United Methodist Women are to live up to our purpose, we must repent of the apathy that creeps into our attitudes toward helping others because of our personal challenges. Forgiveness must become a daily habit as we beg forgiveness from God for our own shortfalls. Finally, we must rejoice always in our victories, giving God the glory because we know they are possible only through His strength and sacrificial love. To be truly "In His Service," our actions must leave no doubt that we are women of Faith, Hope, and Love.

Peace be with you,
Deanie