The Conference Voice

TWELFTH ANNUAL MEETING - OCTOBER 6, 1984 ALABAMA-WEST FLORIDA CONFERENCE

"A MESSAGE TO UNITED METHODIST WOMEN"

The Conference Mission team of 1984 has worked hard in trying to plan and implement a program that carried out the purpose of United Methodist Women to 345 units of the Alabama West Florida Conference.

To Know God.....172 women attended the Annual Conference Spiritual Enrichment Retreat. The theme: "Called to be Peacemakers". Sixty-seven units displayed their Bicentennial banners. A Christian Discipline Workshop for Conference and district officers was led by a team from the Women's Division.

To develop a creative, supportive fellowship.....
"Making a Difference: Women in Electoral Politics," a one day skills workshop, was held in Montgomery, Alabama. This was an opportunity to help women in the community who want to become public leaders . Its purpose was also to develop a support system for women who do not want to enter public leadership but would like to support women candidates with their time, money, skills, and services.

Being a part of the Jurisdiction Meeting in Birmingham, Alabama and the election process was the highlight of the year. Seventeen conferences of the southeast gathered to witness and to be a part of "Visions of Shalom". One hundred and four local, district and conference women represented the Alabama West Florida Conference.

To expand concepts of mission.....District and Conference officers spent a week-end in February involved in a "Funding for Mission" workshop. The purpose was to educate the officers as to what our mission dollars are doing in the world. The workshop was led by Myrtle Gordon, an interpreter of the National Division of the Board of Global Ministries. The Cooperative School of Mission held in August emphasized the 1984 theme of "Peace". One hundred and sixty five men and women studied the 1984-85 mission studies: Swords Into Plowshares", "Korea", and "Ephesians". The theme for the school was "Actions of Faith - Visions of Peace".

If I may, I would take a personal privilege. As I reflect back over the four years that I have served as President of the Alabama West Florida Conference, I think of the many opportunities and the joys that have been available to me: (1) the many opportunities of personal and spiritual growth; (2) the opportunities that help me to develop my leadership skills; (3) the events which I attended that widened my knowledge of the United Methodist Church and United Methodist Women, (4) my involvement in new areas of mission, and last (5) the joy I have had in getting to know so many fine people in all nine districts.

Thank you, Alabama West Florida Conference, for allowing me to serve as your president from 1980-to 1984.

Shalom,
Jane C. Weekley

Committed To Mission Tomorrow

Building On Yesterday

"WHAT SEJ IN BIRMINGHAM MEANT TO ME"

Reporting: Charlotte Nichols,
Highland Park United Methodist Church (Dothan district)

Excitement filled the air as ladies from our seventeen conferences arrived in Birmingham to attend the Third Quadrennial Meeting of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of United Methodist Women. This was not just an ordinary UMW meeting - it was a happening! And I am thrilled that I received the opportunity to attend such a wonderful meeting.

We had so many things to do and share those four days. We had Communion, Bible Study, a play, several interpretative dances, a film, several slide presentations, business sessions and elections, and we heard the famous Birmingham Boys Choir, the Birmingham Southern Concert Choir, solos, and we had community sings. We also attended a luncheon and interest groups of our choice. We had all of this and much more. I was very impressed. The SEJ meeting was also a great learning experience for me. I learned about some of the different kinds of mission work that the UMW is involved in here at home, and I learned about some of the structural part of our organization as well.

The theme of the meeting was "Visions of Shalom". What greater goal could any of us have than to find Peace - in ourselves, in our country, and in our world.

SEJ was a very heartwarming experience for me and I wish in my heart that each and every UMW member could have been there to share in this great event.

Shalom

Reporting: Donna Patterson
Gulfview United Methodist Church
Panama City Beach, Florida
Marrianna/ Panama City district

"Visions of Shalom", the Southeastern Jurisdiction meeting of United Methodist Women held April 5-8, 1984, in Birmingham, Alabama, brings to mind's eye visions of love, joy, and the serene glow of many beautiful sisters in Christ. How exciting it was to be chosen as a delegate to this joyful clebration, to be witness to the decision making processes of the United Methodist Women, actually to be a part of history in the making, during this our Centennial year.

I think I most enjoyed the people, seeing both women and men, who were concerned, caring and committed to sharing the love of our Lord. Mrs. Eva Walker, as President, was a most gracious hostess, and it was very obvious how diligently the committee worked to see that things ran smoothly. The program was woven together skillfully to include a variety of art forms, as well as being informative and challenging to it's viewers. It was a beautiful experience in which we all shared laughter and tears. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting women from throughout our jurisdictional area.

MISSION COORDINATOR FOR SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY
Reporting: Francis Johnson

Fall is upon us and to my dear Christian sisters may God add His blessings upon you. I have covered ground this summer and I've grown in the christian faith. I want all of you to feel "something" as I have. To my counter parts Supportive Community is not a position to take lightly. We are the pillars of support, so let's support!

This is the election year. I hope you're viewing the materials I sent and working locally in Voter Registration drives etc. We're needed and it's great United Methodist Women can be a part of helping people to get out and vote. By now you've probably never registered.

At the Regional School this summer we were asked to please keep Supportive Community Coordinators aware of women and children and their needs, attention, and of prevention of abuse. Number three conference goal: To educate United Methodist Women to the cause, effect and prevention of child and spouse abuse (not to imply United Methodist Women are exempt from the problem). Some of you are already involved, others get involved.

I so much enjoyed World Federation of Methodist Women seminar and oh! what a time I had at Church Women United Ecumenial Assembly and meeting people from all over the world (even Russia). I could not have done this without encouragement locally, district and conference wide. Let's Fall in step as we go on in service of Supportive community.

Reporting: Lois Roberts / 756 Sherwood Drive, Auburn Al. 36830
Conference Chairperson for Blue Lake

Dear Blue Lake Chairpersons:

Thank you for your memorials, gifts and honorariums. These are sent directly to me at the above address. I, in turn, send it to Linwood Lewis, director of Blue Lake Assembly. He uses it for up keep of Blue Lake, such as bed spreads, curtains, mattresses, pillows, etc. We have done well this year in this area.

Now your $2.00 specials for Blue Lake go through the local United Methodist Women treasurer to Alma Singleton, Conference Treasurer. She, in turn, sends it to me and it goes for the Blue Lake Building fund for the proposed new buildings. When I receive it I forward it to Mr. E.E. Anthony, Treasurer. We are also doing well in that area. You receive credit for all contributions.

Keep up the good work and let's make Blue Lake a special place for all people to do God's work.

ANDALUSIA DISTRICT
Reporting: Nell Chance

An emphasis on World Development dominated our District Meetings in 1984. The District Mission Team began this emphasis at the "Fellowship Luncheon" for the training of local officers and local members March 3. Andalusia First Church hosted this district event. Kathy Asheles, of the Women's Prison Project in Montgomery, spoke on "Prison Ministry" and the concerns and needs of women in prison. A Guideline for volunteers and a list of activities providing opportunities for United Methodist Women to become involved in ministry to women in prison were distributed at the meeting. Many of our local units have responded.

Another World Development emphasis was made when the District Mission Team initiated a workshop on "Spouse and Child Abuse" held at East Brewton Church, August 26. Sue Christiansen, who is Executive Director of Favor House in Pensacola was the guest speaker. Fifty to sixty ladies and one minister attended this meeting.

Concluding our emphasis on World Development, the Reverend Tom Terry, minister of Brewton First Church will speak on the subject, PEACE. "Peace" was the 1984 general theme for the Alabama West Florida Conference of United Methodist Women.

Refugees and Refugee Resettlement was a suggested World Development topic. This program was coordinated by Wendy Allen, a VISTA volunteer and two Cambodian refugees. This program was presented at our 1983 District Annual Meeting.

The Andalusia District is calling on its local units to become a TEN UNIT once again in 1984. Four units, Elba, Monroeville, Bermuda and Frisco City were TEN UNITS in 1983. Our TEN UNIT list for 1984 includes the following:

-1. Observe call to prayer and Self Denial
-2. Observe "UMW" Recognition Day in March, April, or May.

-3. Add at least one new member to your local unit and encourage younger women to participate in United Methodist Women.
-4. Complete a recommended Mission Study, Luke, World's Uprooted, or Africa
-5. 10% of members attended Conference Annual Day at Blue Lake, October 6th.
-6. Use program resource, "A Centennial Tapestry" and encourage 100% giving to the Centennial Fund
-7. Increase Mission pledge by 5%.
-8. Officers attend a training session (Fellowship Luncheon, Annual Day or District Annual Meeting).
-9. 100% subscription to ALERT
-10 20% of members attend District Meeting, October 21 at 2:30 P.M. Brewton First Church

Other goals for the District Mission Team in 1984 were to establish four mini-districts throughout the Andalusia District. It is hoped that sharing of resources (materials, speakers, car pools, etc.) can be realized through this smaller grouping units. The district officers in each mini-district would be responsible for "following up" on communications and provide extra help.

The Andalusia District met our conference pledge apportionment of $7,350.00 for 1983. Our mission pledge for 1984 was increased 5%, thus making $7,500.00 our apportionment for 1984.

A $50.00 scholarship to the Alabama West Florida School of Christian Mission was awarded to Opp Memorial, who had the highest (29%) membership increase this year. Red Level was the runner up with a 25% gain in membership.

Eight local units: Andalusia First, Crestview First and Monroeville First were the three winners in the Bicentennial Banner Contest. Other units who participated in the contest were: Bermuda, Frisco City, Florala, Elba and Piney Grove.

Eight ladies attended the Southeastern Jurisdiction Meeting of United Methodist Women Third Quadrennial Meeting in Birmingham, April 5-8.

"UMW Recognition Day" was observed by many local units in the District this year. This annual event strives to assist our local churches and members to become more aware of the PURPOSE of United Methodist Women.

The Andalusia District will observe the Centennial Celebration of United Methodist Women with a slide presentation depicting the history of thirty local units at its Annual District Meeting in October. Each local unit has been asked to write its history and has been encouraged to be 100% in giving to the Centennial Fund.

DEMOPOLIS DISTRICT
Reporting: Jo Anne Carpenter, President

The Demopolis District placed major emphasis on "our" money and where it goes. Workshops were held to help local units better understand budgeting and, in particular, the importance of undesignated giving. It seems to have worked -- giving is <u>up!</u> Another concern was the involvement of younger women.

No new units to report this year but large units have formed seven new circles for younger women!

DOTHAN DISTRICT
Reporting: Monza' Wilson, Dothan District President

A new unit has been organized for each of the last three years. <u>One hundred and twenty six</u> members attended the District World Development Meeting. The units having mission studies have increased from 6 in 1981 to 29 in 1982 to 35 in 1983 and to 33 in 1984. District Annual Meeting attendance has had an

increase from 135 to 186. Some ideas that have worked for us:

1. Units clustered in groups of 3 to observe the World Day of Prayer. This was done geopraphically with 1 of the 3 units taking the lead in serving as organizer-hostess. This effort caused more units than ever before to participate in this meaningful experience.

2. A year ago 3 units co-ordinated their efforts toward participation in all 3 mission studies for 1984. Each sent a representative to the School of Mission with attendance divided in order to participate in all 3 studies. Each unit then spear-headed a study with active involvement by the other 2 units. Due to this "supportive community" and cooperation, Dothan District, for the first time, is reporting 3 units completing all 3 of the Mission Studies for 1984.

MARIANNA/PANAMA CITY DISTRICT
Reporting: Jimmie Nell Williams

The Marianna/Panama City District will meet in Marianna October 27th for the Annual Meeting of the United Methodist Women. The theme for the day will be Committed To Mission-Yesterday - Today - and Tomorrow".

Dr. Norma Taylor Mitchell from Troy, Alabama will be the guest speaker. some highlights of the day will be honoring the former district presidents. There will be three skits given by Marianna - "The Circuit Rider", Sneads -"Excuses" and DeFuniak Springs, "The Washer Woman". We will also have election of officers and Brother Walter Ellisor , Superintendent of Marianna/Panama City District will do the installation Services.

MOBILE DISTRICT
Reporting: Vera Moore

Mobile District United Methodist Women have spent 1984 stressing that we are a Mission Team and that our Mission is to present Christ through the channel of United Methodist Women in every possible way. Culmination of this year long effort will be on district day when the hot air ballon will be used as a symbol expressing the theme, Around the World in Many Ways - United Methodist Women have come a long way.

The President's Club remains a most important link in providing communication between the local unit and the district mission team. Three Presidents Club meetings were held in 1984. The first luncheon meeting at Trinity United Methodist Church, the second an evening dinner meeting at a Mobile restaurant and the third a Saturday afternoon Tea at the Chickasaw United Methodist Church.

Finding a need for a longer session of district planning the executive committee held their Summer session as an over-night meeting at Gulf Shores. The "Pajama Party" provided time and talent to focus on promoting and presenting the district meetings scheduled for late Summer and Fall.

A District Mission Study Sampler is co sponsored by United Methodist Women and the Mobile District Council on Ministries to bring a taste of the Blue Lake School to those who are unable to attend the extended session. It proves to be a very valuable asset in promoting studies.

The district directory is a most valuable tool for leaders at all levels. Mobile District takes pride in having this directory fresh off the press to be distributed at officer training events in November. This is made possible by Presi-dents of the local units bringing with them to the District Annual Meeting a list of their newly elected slate of officers for the coming year. The presentation of this list is used as part of the installation service for district officers and then is ready to be used in compiling the directory.

These out of the ordinary happenings along with regular and usual newsletters, correspondences, retreats and meetings leave Mobile District with the goal of rising to even greater heights in 1985.

MONTGOMERY DISTRICT
Reporting: Julia Norton

The Montgomery District was delighted to be the host district for the Tri-District World Development Workshop in January and the Conference Political Skills Workshop in March. The host unit for both these events was Normandale United Methodist Women in Montgomery. The district is very thankful for the Women of Normandale.

There has also been a marked increase in the number of units to plan and hold a UMW Recognition Sunday.

PENSACOLA DISTRICT
Reporting: Mavis Oliver

This has been and continues to be a busy year for Pensacola District. The year began with several new District leaders, some of whom had never served at the district level, including Tresurer, Vice President, and President.

In January, the District leaders met with the local unit Presidents and Vice President for a luncheon-meeting hosted by First United Methodist Church Pensacola. Each District Leader gave a brief overview of her responsibilities and announced forth-coming events and plans related to her job. An opportunity to get acquainted was provided along with a chance for the sharing of ideas. For a light touch, District Vice President, Joyce Callahan led a group in a centennial skit. The First Church United Methodist Women members are commended for their delicious luncheon and gracious hospitality.

Three leaders and one other United Methodist Women member attended the Mission Financial Intrepretation Workshop held at Blue Lake in February. This workshop has been worked up into a program to take to the local units upon request. They have been notified of availability through the quarterly newsletter.

The Pensacola District Spiritual Retreat was held at Blue Lake February 17-18 with 203 United Methodist Women members attending. Doris Davis, a retired missionary from Zaire spoke on "Traveling the Kings Highway". Sandy Doyle led the music accompanied by Lynda Cast. Rev. Linwood Lewis conducted a Communion Service.

Local United Methodist Women units led the prayer and share groups with study guides provided by Doris Davis. Creative center pieces for the cafeteria depicting the theme were also made by the local unit members. The Loxley Unit furnished name tags while the Niceville Unit provide the worship center for the prayer room.

Pensacola and Mobile Districts joined together last March in presenting a World Development Workshop at Fairhope United Methodist Church. Registration began at 9 A.M. followed by a moving sermon on social involvment by Rev. Marcus Johnson. Workshops on Peace with Justice, Jail Ministries, and Refugees were led by Fairhope United Methodist Women after which speeches and skits were presented by each group. Rev. Libba Stinson from Foley United Methodist Church closed the day with a "sending forth". Both districts were well represented through attendance.

Seven District leaders along with sixteen other people from the Pensacola District attended the United Mehthodist Women SEJ meeting in Birmingham in April. Plans are underway by District leaders to utilize some ideas for leadership training received from this meeting. (The skit on KEDE,- K(Knowledge) E-(Experience) D-(Development) E (Expand), using a carnival atmosphere is being studied).

Over fifty persons from the Pensacola District attended the Cooperative School of Christian Mission this year. From this school, District CSI Coordinator Nancy Risch is organizing classes in the district to teach "Beating Swords into Plowshears."

District United Methodist Women members assisted the District Superintendent and the St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Pensacola in hosting a reception for the new Bishop, Rev. Knox on September 16 by providing cookies, punch, and floral arrangements. Local Unit Presidents served the refreshments.

For their October 21 Annual Meeting at Christ Church in Milton, the District United Methodist Women will continue the centennial celebration by dressing in "century old" costumes and using "Called to Celebrate: Our Continuing Journey" as their theme. Jane Weekly will be guest speaker and also she will install the new officers.

District Leadership training will be held November 8 at Ferry Pass Church in Pensacola. Two sessions for this day are planned to better accommodate all women and the leaders. There will be a 10:00 AM Session followed by a 3:00 PM joint executive board meeting of both old and new District officers, then a night session at 7:30 PM.

One new unit has been added to the Pensacola District this year, Navarre, Florida. This makes a total of 60 units. Over three-fourths of these units have been visited by District Officers throughout the year. The filmstrip produced by Annie Mae Turner "Our Continuing Heritage" has helped the District President, in helping several units to better understand the purpose of United Methodist Women and how it relates to them. It has provided a springboard for questions and discussions as have traveled around the District sharing the filmstrip.

Being District President is like "Here I am Lord, send me" was not in my mind but I do feel very much that the Lord chose me for this job at this time, otherwise I could not begin on my own to meet the responsibilities and challenges with such limited experience and ability. I hope to take my one or whatever talent the Lord has given to me and use it to help it grow to better serve Him and others as I step out in faith. Lord please pick me up when I fall and keep me going when I become discouraged because I truly love you. This is my prayer.

SELMA DISTRICT
Reporting: Peggy McGraw

The year of 1984 has been an eventful one for the United Methodist Women of Selma District. The district leaders have exhibited love and unity which has been evident in the excellent programs and activities which they have planned and implemented.

On January 21, 1984, the Selma, Troy, and Montgomery Districts united to hold a World Development Workshop with emphasis on Spouse Abuse, Family Farms, Prison Ministry, Refugees, and Peace With Justice.

In order to increase their awareness of political activities, the Selma District Women participated in a Political Skills Workshop on March 10th. This workshop included many skillful ideas and suggestions on topics such as running for office, voting, and when to speak out on issues and problems facing women and their families in today's world.

A special event of the year was the Jurisdiciton Conference in Birmingham. The theme was "Sojourners to Shalom" and a large number of our ladies had the opportunity to attend and participate in this four-day event.

For our "Day Together" on April 28th, we were fortunate to have with us as our special guest, Ruth Heyne, Conference Co-ordinator for Christian Personhood. She shared a inspirational message encouraging us all to become peacemakers in our relationships with others.

The Conference School of Christian Mission was held the second week in August at Blue Lake. Those attending were fortunate to share in such a wonderful period of study, spiritual enrichment and renewal.

Our district was very well represented at this year's school. Mary Elizabeth Carter was the Associate Dean and we are especially proud of the fact that she is to be the Dean of the 1985 School. Eloise McGucken has served the Conference as Secretary for the past four years and is now a nominee for Conference President.

We are indeed proud to have Frances Jones in our district. She works so diligently and faithfully with SERRV, not only in our district but all around our Conference and even goes into the North Alabama Conference.

A very unique opportunity was afforded us at our District Annual Meeting on Sunday afternoon, September 9th. This meeting was our celebration of the Centennial. Several ladies wore Centennial dresses which seemed to take us back in time to 100 years ago. In addition to an excellent turnout of United Methodist Women, a large number of ministers including our District Superintendent, the Rev. Robert Vaughn, were present as well as quite a few laymen.

We met at the Memorial United Methodist Church in Selma for our Annual Meeting, for our Centennial Celebration. It was at this same church that we met twelve years ago for our Charter organization as United Methodist Women and it was very fitting that we could meet there again for our Centennial.

Well known author and story teller, also a United Methodist Woman, Katherine Tucker Windham, presented a very intriguing program in which she portrayed "The Life of Julia Tutwiler." Most appropriately, an offering was received to present to the Julia Tutwiler Prison Chapel Fund.

It is our desire to continue to grow in grace and to become more mission oriented to all people and to become real peacemakers in our world.

TROY DISTRICT
Reporting: Annie Mae Turner

The Troy District wishes to correct the more than $3,000 made in reporting its Pledge to Mission in 1983. According to Minnie Catherine Davis, former district treasurer, and Alma Singleton, Conference treasurer, the Troy District Pledge to Mission was $8,779.67 instead of $6,605.64 as reported in the 1984 Directory. Local women in the Troy District are to be commended for exceeding their pledge in this significant way. Current treasurer Letha Parker reports that she expects the local units to once again meet the pledge for 1984.

Troy District's own Frieda Finance is helping to keep women throughout the conference informed about the untold benefits of our MISSION DOLLARS!

Another highlight of the year in Troy District was the experience of joining with our sisters in the Selma and Montgomery Districts in a highly successful WORLD DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP on January 21, 1984, in Montgomery. This cooperative venture not only sharpened the leadership skills of our MISSION TEAM, but it provided our women with a new awareness of the crucial issues of our time and pointed the way to some practical Christian solutions. Topics covered were Latin America, Child and Spouce Abuse, Prison Ministry for Women, Refugees, and the Plight of the Farmer.

"THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL-DONE"

It is always a little sad when the time comes for officers to be elected. In the midst of the excitement of new perons being elected during each annual meeting there are always some who are serving at their last one. This year there are several members of the executive committee who are changing their involvement in United Methodist Women from an active term on the Conference Level of the organization to local unit participation. They shall be missed, for sure.

A big "thank-you" goes to each of them for their commitment and involvement in the conference as they have given of their time, energies, and talents in their particular fields of endeavor.

These people are: Ann Gordy - Vice President; Anne Dalton - Mission Coordinator for Christian Social Involvement; Zelda Medley - Chairperson of Membership; Jane Weekley - President; and Bess Evans - Secretary of Publicity and Public Relations.

Please speak to these persons during the week-end and in the following months and let them know how much you appreciate the job that they have done through their responsibilities on the conference mission team.

"ALERT BUSINESS IS ALIVE AND WELL"

The ALERT business is going strong though the end of the year brings a drop in subscription sales and renewals. It has been a slow summer and fall for income but it is due primarily to the tremendous Winter and Spring response by individuals as well as whole units. Please do not let the expiration of your subscription catch you without an ALERT. Keep your subscription up to date.

It is no longer necessary to send the ALERT editor your unit officers' new addresses. All updated mailings are handled now through the district secretary who uses those addresses she needs before passing them on to the Secretary of Publicity and Public Relations. Be sure to have those changes in before the end of the year so the corrections and additions can be made.

Circulation of ALERT is presently under 3,000. For the past two issues the exact mailing figures have been 2927 to 2950. With the addition of conference pastors and Christian educators since spring we have continued to hold on to a figure very close to 3,000. Some issues almost 500 subscriptions expire and it is important that if you are in need of renewing yours -- you send $1.00 and your name and address to the editor. Cost of subscriptions is still low and can remain so as long as subscriptions are as high as they are now.

It was the editor's dream that every member of United Methodist Women would receive ALERT during her time of service to the conference mission team. Even though it is still not a reality that number has increased from 1 out of every 11 to almost 1 out of every 4 . Thank you for your support.