



United
Methodist
Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

ALERT

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2016 Conference Officers

President	Lynn Hamric
Vice President	Betty Smith
Secretary	Charlotte Hobson
Treasurer	Margaret Larsen
Prog. Resources	open
Communications	Laurel Akin
Nominations Chair	Lorna Wiggins

Mission Coordinators

Spiritual Growth	Nancy Shealy
Social Action	Zan Jones
M.N. & O	Tutti Johnson
Ed. & Interp	Shirley Hodges

Committee on Nominations

Cynthia Brown	Betty Helms
Sheila Hare	Reda Brooks
Lorna Wiggins	

UMW Program Advisory Group
Representative Clara Ester

Webmaster Vera Moore

HAPPY BIRTHDAY UNITED METHODIST WOMEN MARCH 23!

It has been 147 years since eight women gathered at Tremont Methodist Episcopal Church in Boston, Mass., on March 23, 1869 and organized what would become United Methodist Women. We celebrate their dedication and foresight with a special gift to United Methodist Women on March 23, A Day of Giving.

Great News! Former United Methodist Women board presidents and chief executive officers have secured a matching fund for this Day of Giving. Donations will be matched 2 to 1, increasing every gift 50%. The matching gifts will not apply to recurring gifts initiated prior to the Day of Giving. Now is the time to invite a friend to give!

Giving is easy!

- Online at www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/legacyfund.
- By phone: 800-278-7771 (8 a.m.-6 p.m. EST, Monday-Friday).
- Text **Legacy150** to 41444.
- By check to Office of the Treasurer, United Methodist Women, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115. Write "The Legacy Fund" in the memo section.

See you at the birthday party at Spiritual Enrichment Retreat at Blue Lake!

Always your servant,

Nancy Shealy



FROM THE PRESIDENT



As I sit here this morning with my coffee and devotional guide I feel a very heavy weight upon me. I feel it is my responsibility to keep current on all aspects of government, politics, education, etc., that impact our lives, in particular our women and children. I must confess that I am concerned about our current state of affairs. I do not intend to be a bearer of bad news only, but I also have concerns about our churches and the lack of individuals participating in active worship. I know I am not alone and I ask each of you to join me in daily prayer for our world, not just our country, but our world. We ARE a global society and it's time we started acting like one. What we learned in the sand box is still important and our leaders need to implement these same rules. "Play nice," as my mother would say, and everyone wins when you do.

We are in the Holy Lenten season, a high point in our church year. Much prayer and study will be done during this time and that is good...but we need to do the same throughout the year. Hearing and reading the word helps keep us grounded and provides instructions as to how we should live our lives while helping others.

Right now we have a special opportunity to reach out to our neighbors from various lands who are fleeing circumstances beyond our imagination. Families are separated in this process, loved ones die due to the harsh conditions under which they must travel, and there are always predators waiting for just the right opportunity. We must work on the systemic cause of this problem. We must act now to change laws making the immigration process more accessible and less lengthy. We must remain within the law but act to change the laws where they work for the benefit of all. We cannot and must not sit idly by while our sisters and brothers suffer. We are better people than that and we are called by God to ACT not just give lip service.

"God's mercy transforms human hearts; it enables us, through the experience of a faithful love...inspiring each of us to love our neighbors and to devote ourselves...to works of mercy...This can be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty, and to enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy." Pope Francis

Super Bowl Sunday represented one of the largest human trafficking days in the US, especially in one locale. United Methodist Women across the country made statements against this with pictures of members and pretty umbrellas. The issue is properly before us...NOW THE WORK BEGINS. Negligence in confronting this type action against the most vulnerable in society is not what Christians nor Americans are supposed to do. Failure to address the root causes of poverty, violence, lack of education and persecution will only make matters worse. It is incumbent upon us, UNITED Methodist Women, to individually and collectively work where we live but also work where laws are made that can change the lives of thousands. Please join with me in this effort. Contact your elected officials regularly and give them direction in what you want them to do. Research the issues (go to UMW online for information) and write very detailed and pointed letters. Remember, they work FOR us and sometimes we need to remind them of that.

I ask that you join with me in reading this prayer every morning and reflecting on what it means to you and how you can bring action out of it for those less fortunate.

The Prayer of Penitence for Ash Wednesday says:

Most holy and merciful God,

we confess to you and to one another, and to the whole communion of saints in heaven and on earth, that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word and deed: by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others, as we have been forgiven.

Have mercy on us, Lord. (adapted from the Book of Common Prayer by Susan Henry-Crowe)

F. Lynn Hamric

A Message from the Vice President

This is the beginning of my first year as Vice President of the Alabama-West Florida Conference. Since I took this office I have attended training at Lake Junaluska, attended an Executive Board meeting at Blue Lake, and participated in Dothan District Officer training in Headland.

One of the things I was asked to do was to review the guidelines of one of our Conference specials. This is regularly done to ensure that their mission has remained the same as it was when it was approved by the conference. We want each UMW member to know that the \$9.75 given by them as part of their contribution is being spent as reported in the literature given them by the conference.



Another thing that I have been asked to do is plan for our Fall Event which will be October 21st and 22nd of this year at Blue Lake. Please mark these dates on your calendars as it looks like we will have a thought provoking and informative session. There will be more information coming later.

Betty Smith, Vice President

Education and Interpretation

Our United Methodist Women's PURPOSE includes mission work, specifically mission work in the name of women, children and youth. There is no better summary of this work than in the February 2016 issue of response magazine. This is a report on the projects supported by United Methodist Women through 2014 and 2015.

When we give our money to Mission Giving and special offerings, we are assured that women, children and youth are being helped in this country and all over the world. "United Methodist Women endeavors to empower women and youth to care for themselves and their families and to provide the leadership that their communities and nations sorely need." (response, February 2016, p.17)

Maps in this issue show specific missions in Africa, Asia and Pacific Islands, the Caribbean, Europe, Mexico and Central America, the Middle East/Europe, South America, the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Two hundred seventeen plus projects are listed. We are changing lives for the better in the United States and around the world. Go to www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/finance to see the transparency of our giving.



Shirley Hodges, Education and Interpretation Coordinator

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.

Social Action: .Where is the Justice?

According to the United Methodist discipline “As a church, we are called to support the poor and challenge the rich... Poverty most often has systemic causes, and therefore we do not hold poor people morally responsible for their economic state.” (Social Principles-paragraph 163E).

Economic injustice persists in spite of the longest period of economic prosperity in our history. The gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen. Tens of millions, particularly children, women, and the elderly live in poverty, and a disproportionate share are of ethnic and racial minorities.

The National Women’s Law Center calculates that women are only 46% of the workforce, but make up three-quarters of low-wage workers. It also indicates women of color are only 16% of the total workforce but make up 37% of low-wage workers.

Conversely, racism encourages people to perpetuate a system of privileges and economic rewards that opens the door of opportunity much wider for some than for others. This should not be tolerated. We as United Methodist Women should get involved by contacting our legislature and encourage them to support legislation that will provide fair wages and benefits for women and children.

United Methodist Women of the Alabama-West Florida Conference, where will you stand in the long line of economic injustice. Ask yourself, “Where is the justice?” and then take a stand to help make a change.

Remember: Faith, Hope and Love in Action!

Women of Action,
Zan M. Jones- Social Action-Coordinator



From the Conference Chairman on Nominations

As we start a new year we are anxious to find talent in unexpected places—so we are asking all UMW members to fill out a Talent Bank Information form, found on pages 9 & 10. A number of units have not had this resource and we hope every member will work with us. The form can be given to your local chairman to mail or you can email directly to me:

Lorna Wiggins lornawiggins@bellsouth.net

For U.S. mail my address is: 1203 Hickory Lane, Auburn, AL 36830.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at: 334-887-9568.

If I am not home please leave your name and number and I will return your call.

Many thanks for your help,

Lorna Wiggins



Give Thanks.
Give Now.



A Message from Our Treasurer

We did well last year, paying more than our Pledge. We are not having any extra special projects this year but focusing on Legacy 150. Remember to Pledge so we can meet our Conference Pledge again.

The Conference Askings for 2015 were \$44,428. Dumas Wesley received \$8135, Nellie Burge \$3664, SKIP \$4386, Inner City Mobile \$3288 and Hispanic Ministries \$3293. Blue Lake received \$9205 which they are using for 25 new Mattresses and covers. This means more comfortable beds for everyone! All the agencies are very grateful for our donations.

We will be taking a large check to Jurisdiction. \$1500 of it raised last year. You all should be proud of what we are able to do for National UMW and local Ministries. I know that individual units give to local charities as well, so our money is well spent helping many people all over the country and world.


Thank you for all you do,

Margaret Larson, Conference Treasurer.



Here's What's Happening in 2016!

March 18-20	Spiritual Enrichment Retreat @ Blue Lake
March 23	2nd Annual Day of Giving
June 3-5	SEJ Quadrennial Meeting @ Embassy Suites, Charleston, S.C.
July 29-30	Mission u @ First UMC Millbrook, Ala.
October 21-22	Fall Event @ Blue Lake



"A Fresh Wind Blowing"

"The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."
John 3:8 NRS

**Southeastern Jurisdiction
Quadrennial Meeting**

**Embassy Suites/Convention Center
Charleston, SC
June 3-5, 2016**

Registration for this meeting is online only @

<http://bit.do/sej2016>

Check out the SEJ Facebook page,

<https://www.facebook.com/sejumw>

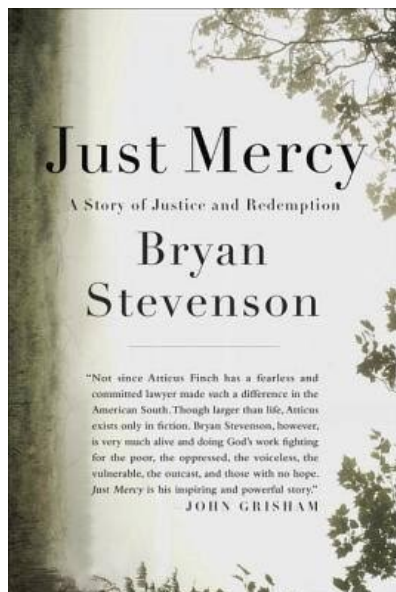
Our Purpose:

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.

Reading Program Book Review: *Just Mercy*

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. Many prisons are overcrowded, dangerous, and terrifying places where imprisoned men, women, and children are illegally abused and victimized.

As part of the Toulminville-Warren Street United Methodist Church United Methodist Women reading program, they recently read and discussed the book **Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson**. This book vividly told the story of the extent to which minority groups were and still are marginalized; African Americans suffered the harshest of treatment by a legal system designed to do just that. Bryan Stevenson, a young lawyer and the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative which is a nonprofit human rights organization providing legal services to the poor, incarcerated, and condemned. He tells the story of client after client whose causes he took on to help right the wrong of the miscarriage of justice they had suffered. Bryan Stevenson has dedicated his life, against great odds, to help those who had been wrongfully accused of crimes or had received excessive punishment. This book is a must read because it will make us appreciate the work that the **Equal Justice Initiative** is doing.



Review written by Cassandra D. Brown

Toulminville-Warren Street United Methodist Church United Methodist Women open their umbrellas to intercept human trafficking!



Check out this and many more photos of United Methodist Women raising their umbrellas on flickr at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/umwomen/with/24345415589/>

Communications: Standing in Our Faith

For me, one of the many rewards of serving as a district or conference officer is the opportunity for learning and leadership development. In January I attended Leadership Development Days at Lake Junaluska and was blessed to attend the workshop “**Standing in Our Faith**” led by Mollie Vickery, a deaconess and the United Methodist Women’s executive for children, youth and family advocacy. One sentence from the workshop description summarizes it well, “*This workshop will help participants engage in a critical analysis of the concerns that society, the church and United Methodist Women confront on a daily basis.*”

We were given two handouts—one about techniques for handling unpopular issues and another on United Methodist Women, Reproductive Justice and the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. Mollie told us that the issue she most often gets emails about in her job with United Methodist Women is abortion, and the mistaken belief by some that United Methodist Women funds abortions. This is not true, and never has been, and no money from pledges or any other source is provided to support programs of the RCRC. United Methodist Women and the General Board of Church and Society are members of the RCRC to bring the view of the church into discussions of issues affecting the health and safety of women, children and youth.

United Methodist Women *does* allocate funds to support national and international mission projects which address the needs of women, children, and youth, including teen pregnancy prevention programs, adoption services, family counseling, youth centers, shelters for families suffering from domestic violence, and child care centers, just to name a few. You can read all about where the money goes here: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/finance

Mollie shares more information, as well as her personal story related to reproductive health, in her article “The Blessing of Support” in the March issue of *response*. You can read it here: <http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/the-blessing-of-support>.

Laurel Akin,
Communications

ALERT! . . . Are you a Subscriber?

You too can become informed of Alabama-West Florida Conference United Methodist Women events and activities by subscribing to *Alert* today!

Send your name and address and telephone number to Laurel Akin, 104 Windwood Lane, Enterprise AL 36330. Enclose a \$4.00 check, made payable to Alabama-West Florida Conference United Methodist Women (AWFCUMW). You may receive a copy of *ALERT* free by email. Email laurel36330@gmail.com with your request and you will be added to our email list. **Please include a telephone number! With each issue that is sent, several mailed and emailed copies are returned!**



TALENT BANK INFORMATION ON PROSPECTIVE LEADERSHIP

(To be completed by prospective leader)

Type or Print (attach additional sheets as necessary)

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone: Home _____ Work _____

Email _____

Local Church _____ District _____

Age: _____ 20's _____ 30's _____ 40's _____ 50's _____ 60's _____ 70's _____ 80's+

Languages Spoken _____ Racial/Ethnic Group _____

Professional skills, job experience _____

Office(s) held in United Methodist Women

	Office(s)	Dates of Service
Local	_____	_____
	_____	_____
District	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Conference	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Jurisdiction	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Additional Experience on the local, district, conference or general church level (other than United Methodist Women) or in the community

Special Talents or Skills:

Areas of Special Interest or Concern:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> secretarial | <input type="checkbox"/> recruiting members | <input type="checkbox"/> publicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> communication | <input type="checkbox"/> social issues | <input type="checkbox"/> workshops |
| <input type="checkbox"/> computer | <input type="checkbox"/> creativity | <input type="checkbox"/> newsletters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> accounting/bookkeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> recording minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> retreats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> organization of details | <input type="checkbox"/> public policy | <input type="checkbox"/> music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> nominations | <input type="checkbox"/> public relations | <input type="checkbox"/> youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> program planning | <input type="checkbox"/> community building | <input type="checkbox"/> children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> administration | <input type="checkbox"/> inclusiveness/pluralism | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |

<input type="checkbox"/> President	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership Nurture & Outreach
<input type="checkbox"/> Vice President	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Action
<input type="checkbox"/> Secretary	<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual Growth
<input type="checkbox"/> Treasurer	<input type="checkbox"/> Program Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Chair of Nominations	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications
<input type="checkbox"/> Education & Interpretation	

_____ I am sorry but I am unable to accept an office this year. Please keep my name on file and contact me in _____.



New
Member
Packet

MISSION u: LEARNING TOGETHER FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD

At Mission u: Learning Together for Transformation of the World you grow in understanding of the mission of the church in the current world context. The studies give particular attention to the responsibilities of women in the fulfillment of the mission work of the church.

Mission u Events also include:

- ❖ Worship & Singing
- ❖ Interest Groups around current issues
- ❖ Audiovisual presentations
- ❖ Fellowship events

2016

JULY 29 – 30

MISSION U

Mission Studies

Each year, United Methodist Women members prepare for faithful living and action by studying mission studies. Mission studies are offered each year – a geographical, topical, and spiritual growth study. These studies motivate, inform, and enrich our commitment to global ministry.

Local leaders are trained to lead one of the three mission studies through the organization's Mission u program offered around the country. Those leaders, in turn, are able to lead mission studies in their local and district groups.

2016 Mission Studies

Spiritual Growth
The Bible & Human
Sexuality
Study Leaders:
Julie Taylor
&
Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson

Geographic:
Latin America: People
and Faith
Study Leader:
Susan Hunt

Issue Study:
Climate Justice
Study Leaders:
Debbie Bracewell
&
Sue Owens

MILLBROOK FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

3350 Edgewood Road
Millbrook, AL

Friday & Saturday
7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Each church and local unit of United Methodist Women is strongly encouraged to participate in what are timely studies. It is our hope that units will take advantage of this opportunity by sending at least three people to Mission u in order to offer all three studies in their local unit.

Scholarships are available! The Don Brill scholarship is for clergy during the first five years of their ministry and are attending Mission u for the first time.

The Lib Clairdy scholarship is for lay persons that have never attended Mission u.

The Nell Chance scholarship is for new UMW members that have never attended Mission u.

Look for more information and the registration form in the next ALERT in May and on the AWF-UMW & Ala/West Fla. Conference websites!

United Methodist Women
Alabama-West Florida
Conference
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Enterprise, AL 36330

