

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings Sisters in Christ,

Wow! Summer is finally upon us and isn't it GREAT? Spring and Summer are my favorite seasons because I dearly love planting, nurturing and watching flowers grow and bloom and then sharing them with friends and neighbors. Don't forget the beautiful visitors flower gardens bring in the form of butterflies and birds. Now that I think about it, this isn't too much different than what we as Christians do, is it? We prepare ourselves by staying in the word and being nurtured by individuals who are mature Christians. Then ...yes, that's right, we grow and become seasoned fruit and go out into the world and share in word and deed. When our actions are right we attract beautiful new members who help us carry on our work. This sounds a lot like our United Methodist Women's Purpose. June and July are exciting months for our organization. I sincerely hope and pray that you are preparing to be involved in as many of these upcoming events as possible. We not only need your support and involvement but you will greatly expand your concepts of mission by meeting with other believers and growing spiritually. It is also a time to prepare to elect leaders within our organization. If you are interested in serving as an officer in our conference, please do not hesitate to contact our Chair of Nominations and complete a talent blank. We are always looking for women of all ages to join with us in leading our conference to serve women, children and youth throughout the world.

June 3-5 a delegation from our conference attended the Southeast Jurisdiction Meeting. Delegates elected directors for the National United Methodist Women's Organization. We have the distinction of having Betty Helms elected as SEJ president and Clara Ester elected as a director. Our conference voting delegates were Margaret Larson, Nancy Shealy and me. Much thought and prayer went into this and will continue as we support those who have so willingly agreed to serve.

June 12-15 we gather in Montgomery to conduct the business of our church at Annual Conference. You may ask how this impacts United Methodist Women. Remember, the Discipline states that there shall be a unit of United Methodist Women in every church. Since UMW is the only officially recognized women's group it is very important that we have a presence at Annual Conference and make the work we do known. It is also important that we actively cultivate good working relationships with, and support for, our clergy.

July brings our Executive Mission Team together July 15-16 to finalize plans for the remainder of the year. With our shift to a calendar year our October 21-22 Fall event will be one that you simply must attend. More on this later from our vice president.

July 29-31 offers one of the best educational opportunities that I think our denomination offers to lay and clergy alike. It's our Mission u Event. This year it will be held in Millbrook, Ala. and there is information and a registration form in this Alert. The leaders are dynamic and the topics are pertinent to our everyday lives. I strongly encourage each of you reading this to not only plan to attend but bring a friend with you. You will not be disappointed. Betty Helms is serving as Dean so you know everything will be perfect.

Your mind is a garden. Your thoughts are the seeds. You can grow flowers or you can grow weeds.

F. Lynn Hamric

A Message from the Vice President

As I write this our General Conference is in session in Portland, Oregon. I hope all of you have been praying for God's guidance as these men and women discuss and make decisions for our church.

As I reported in the last issue of Alert, I was given the task of reviewing the guidelines of one of our Conference specials. I'm happy to report that the Inner City Mission in Mobile has been so cooperative in furnishing me with everything I asked for. You can be proud of the work that they are doing for the residents in that city.

Please prayerfully consider attending Mission u this July at Millbrook United Methodist Church.

There is information concerning this event in this issue of the Alert. Take time to read about the courses being offered and decide what you would like to learn more about.



Also, please keep the dates of October 21st and 22nd open as we will be having a Fall Event at Blue lake. There will be speakers on issues that are important to us as Christians and women. There will be more on this in the future.

Betty Smith, Vice President

Education and Interpretation

Hard to believe, but it is that time of year to be making plans to attend Mission u July 29-30. This event is sponsored by ALWF Conference United Methodist Women, the Conference Board of Church and Society, and the Conference Board of Global Ministries. It is a time of "Learning Together for Transformation of the World," and there are great opportunities to study current issues impacting society, to grow spiritually and to be in community with fellow United Methodists working to put faith, hope and love into action. Annual conferences all over the country host these events. There is a spiritual growth study, a geographic study and an issue study (all are listed on the registration form in this newsletter). The registration deadline is July 16; after that date, there is a \$10 late fee added. You will find motels listed on the registration form, and there are blocks of rooms reserved.

Books for these studies are available through Mission Resources and will be available at the host church, Millbrook FUMC in Millbrook, Alabama. It is really a good idea to get study books early and read them prior to classes to get the most benefit.

Mission u is a wonderful educational opportunity, and taking advantage of educational opportunities is a focus of United Methodist Women. There will be meaningful worship sessions as well as wonderful times of fellowship. So, I hope to see you in Millbrook, Alabama July 29-30. You will be so glad you came!

Blessings,

Shirley Hodges, Education and Interpretation Coordinator



Social Action: Focus on Climate Justice

What is Climate Justice? “Climate Justice” is a term used for framing global warming as an ethical and political issue, rather than one that is purely environmental or physical in nature.”

The United Methodist church discipline states: *“All creation is the Lord’s, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God’s creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings. God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect.”* (Social Principles, ¶ 160).

Deuteronomy 30:19 says, *“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you, life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live.”*

We could go on talking about the many causes of climate change and climate injustice, but we as United Methodist Women must do our part to make sure we raise our voices to aid those in need. We aided the people of Flint, Michigan by providing bottled water in response to the water crisis there. An Action Alert about this ongoing issue may be found at <http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/the-flint-water-crisis>.

I encourage units to review and practice the 13 steps of Sustainability and become a “be just. be green” advocate at <http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/what-we-do/service-and-advocacy/mission-focus-issues/environmental-justice/sustainability/signup>.

Mission U will offer a class on Climate Justice. I encourage you to join us and learn more about what you can do help aid in Climate Justice. Remember you help change the world’s carbon footprint. Let’s take **Action!**

United Methodist Women in Action,

Zan M. Jones, Social Action Coordinator



Membership Nurture and Outreach

Applications for Mission u are coming in and it looks like we're going to have a good group. I also wanted to point out that we really want to fill this school up because we have some exceptional teachers who are well prepared and ready to teach us some very interesting things!



See you at Mission u!

Tutti Johnson, Membership Nurture and Outreach Coordinator
and Mission u Registrar

From Our Spiritual Growth Coordinator

"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy and you are that temple?" 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

NEWS...we will be given a special gift at Mission u on July 29-30 at Millbrook 1st United Methodist Church in Millbrook, AL. Our Spiritual Growth Study, "The Bible and Human Sexuality: Claiming God's Good Gift". You do not want to miss this special study and learn God has made us and loves each one of us just like we are. A must read is the May issue of Response Magazine. Harriett Jane Olson states "As a member of United Methodist Women becoming a whole person through Jesus Christ, I hope this study helps me bring my whole self more fully into the practice of loving God".

I am looking forward to being with you all at Mission u!

Always your servant,

Nancy Shealy



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.

A Message from Our Treasurer

I want everyone to know how our money is being spent by the agencies we support. Nellie Burge in Montgomery sent me a thank-you for the first quarter offering. They used it to provide 10 families with life skills: to manage their money, pay down debt, save up for a place of their own, improve their interaction with others, time management, meal preparation, organizing and de-cluttering, home-making basics, decision making and healthy habits. Thanks to United Methodist Women, 15 children will go to bed full, well nourished, and better off than the night before.

Hispanic-Latino Ministries are using the money we give them to set up Legal clinics for immigrant women, children and families. Casa de Dios Gateway of Heaven Inc in Mary Esther UMC is serving as a model for future legal clinics in other areas of the Alabama-West Florida Conference. These clinics in the Pensacola district, also serve Baypines and Mobile districts.

We are making a difference all over our conference. As the up-coming Mission u will teach us, there are other spheres of influence we can have on the world!

Margaret Larson, Conference Treasurer



Our Mission u Study Leaders:

Spiritual Growth: The Bible and Human Sexuality



Julie Taylor, Executive Director National Farm Worker Ministry (NFWM), helps to guide the organization in its mission as a faith-based organization committed to justice for and empowerment of farm workers. Previously, Julie was the Executive for Spiritual Growth at the National Office of United Methodist Women and first came to UMW in 2000 as the Executive for Child and Family Advocacy. In this position, she directed their Initiative on Domestic Violence in partnership with United Methodist Men. The issues addressed by her office also included public education, child labor, farm worker conditions, reproductive justice and older women’s concerns. She received her master’s degree in Christian Spiritual Formation and Leadership from Spring Arbor University, Michigan and has a bachelor’s degree in Christian Education from Asbury University, Kentucky. Originally from Eclectic, AL, Julie currently lives in Raleigh, NC.

Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson grew up in the Methodist Church in Haiti where she was very involved in the ministry of the church and immigrated to the United States in September 1988. A year later she became involved with the United Methodist Women organization. Judith held offices on the Miami District mission team for 11 years. At the conference level Judith served on the Membership Committee, as Registrar, Assistant Dean, and Dean of the School of Christian Mission (now Mission u). In 2008 she was elected a Director of Women’s Division and chaired the Committee on Nominations. Re-elected in 2012, she currently chairs the Governance Committee. During her involvement with United Methodist Women, Judith has taught mission studies, led retreats, workshops, training events and Bible studies at the national, conference and district levels. A member of Miramar United Methodist Church, Judith is the co-Lay Leader for her congregation and the co-secretary of her local United Methodist Women’s Group. Judith and her husband, Doug, have one daughter, Grace, who is a United Methodist Women Limitless member.

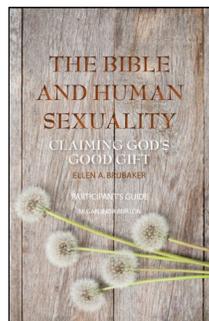
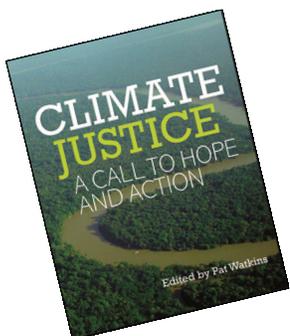


Judith earned a diploma in Sociology, a Bachelor of Arts in Interpersonal and Group Communications, a Master of Arts in Religion, a Master of Science in Special Education, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Education degrees. She teaches and advocates for students with autism and their families in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Dr. Pierre-Okerson is currently a Deaconess candidate.

Geographic: Latin America-People and Faith



Susan Hunt grew up in Birmingham, Alabama. She graduated in 1995 from Auburn and worked for several years in Birmingham. After hearing a call into full-time Christian ministry, she served as a young-adult missionary in Oklahoma City, OK, for two years. She then worked for a large United Methodist Congregation there as the mission outreach coordinator. She returned to Alabama in January 2009 to begin her current position as Director of Mission and Advocacy for the Alabama-West Florida annual conference. She was commissioned a Deaconess of the United Methodist Church in March 2004. She lives in Montgomery and is a member of Montgomery First UMC.



Our Mission u Study Leaders:

Issue study: Climate Justice

Debbie Bracewell is a retired teacher, executive, editor, speaker and cheer judge. She currently is a tutor, president of the Recovery Organization of Coffee County, independent Young Living Distributor, and a volunteer for church and community.



Debbie has been a member of the Enterprise First United Methodist Church Circle 6 since 2004 and is the current president of United Methodist Women unit at Enterprise First United Methodist Women. She is the Dothan District chair for Membership Nurture and Outreach and has been the Communications chair. She has taught the *Immigration* mission study and the *Roma of Europe* study for the Dothan District. She taught *The Church and People with Disabilities* study at the July 2014 Mission u event and the *Latin America: People and Faith* study for Mission u 2015.

Debbie has a degree in English Education from Troy State, a Master's Degree in Secondary Education from Troy State Dothan, and a Master's Degree in Strategic Communication from Troy University. Debbie is a widow with 2 sons, 2 stepsons, and 10 grandchildren. In her spare time she enjoys gardening and traveling.



Sue Owens retired from teaching Physical Education/Health after 29 years in the same junior high. She served eight years as Director on Women's Division and four years on General Board of Global Ministries. She has led retreats on the local, district and conference levels. She has facilitated studies in Mission Schools in California, Kentucky, South Carolina, West Virginia, New Mexico, and North Carolina. Throughout her varied experiences, she has found that a person profits most when she enjoys what she is doing. Her desire is that participants in her class will be challenged, but will enjoy being challenged.

Mission u Dean: Betty Helms

Assistant Dean: Clara Ester

Scholarships Available for the Mission u Scholarship Committee

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.

Contact Harry Hodges, Scholarship Chair

334-636-5166

harryhodges@yahoo.com

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.

Isn't It Your Time to Serve?

When I received the gentle reminder from Laurel Akin that it was time to send in an article for the Alert, I thought you might like to know the members of the Nominations Committee and the Districts assigned to each. Their emails are listed below their names.

Name	District
Reda Brooks brf817@bellsouth.net	Montgomery/Prattville Montgomery/Opelika
Cynthia Brown cynthiabrown350@gmail.com	Demopolis Mobile
Sheila Hare s.share13@gmail.com	Bay Pines Pensacola
Betty Helms betty@fumcdothan.org	Dothan Marianna/Pensacola



As you know we face a challenge in getting officers. We are anxious to reach a wider, more diverse group and we are asking for the help of the district presidents. Would you please send a copy of this article and a copy of the Talent Bank form to each local President. Please ask them to discuss our need for those willing to serve. We need Talent Bank forms from all members even if they cannot serve this next year. We are not trying to take members that you might need but where else will we get candidates? Please send completed forms to:

Lorna Wiggins, 1203 Hickory Lane, Auburn, AL 36830 or email to: lornawiggins@bellsouth.net

In thinking about taking an office I decided to make a list of pros and cons.

Pros:

- Learning new skills
- Broadening your friendships in UMW
- Visiting new geographic locations
- Extending a helping hand
- Being in on the planning
- Introducing new ideas
- Making a difference

Cons:

- Adjusting your calendar for UMW meetings
- Coping with people not as dedicated to UMW as you are
- Covering for those who drop the ball
- Dealing with the stress of working with parameters not your own

After you have read my pros and cons you may want to add some of your own. But there is one thing that I have not mentioned and that is the **JOY** that comes with serving. Help is always present. I think we do not ask for help from officers who have held the offices and friends who have held similar positions but we should.

After you have finished reading this article, please close your eyes and put your hand in the kind, loving hand reaching out to you at all times—to steady you, to comfort you, to strengthen you and to lead you. Our Father's hand is always there but we must reach out and take it to find the help we all need. Believe Paul when he tells the Philippians **"I can do everything through him who gives me strength."** **Philippians 4:13. NIV**

Isn't it your time to serve?

Many thanks for your help,

Lorna Wiggins, Nominations Chair

2016 Alabama/West Florida Conference Mission u Event Registration Form

July 29-30, 2016 – Millbrook First United Methodist Church – Millbrook, AL

Deadline for registration: July 16, 2016. Send this completed form with full payment to Tutti Johnson, Registrar – P.O. Box 598 – Pine Hill, AL 36769 Email: tuttijohnson@yahoo.com Phone: 334-963-9001

Make checks payable to ALWF Mission u. Questions can be directed to registrar.

NAME _____ DISTRICT _____

ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE _____ CELL PHONE _____ WORK _____

EMAIL _____

Please check all that apply: Female Male Clergy Lay CEU Credit

Conference/District Officer & Position _____

Need assistance traveling/moving around the campus

If dining on campus, list special needs (dietary, physical, access. etc.) of participants and attach to this form.

STUDY COURSE REGISTRATION FEES

Each study is a 6 hour course and offered one full day. Registration begins each day at 7:30 a.m. The opening/orientation begins at 8:30 a.m. Classes begin immediately following the opening/orientation and finish at 4:30 p.m. each day.

Fees include registration fee, lunch and dinner on the day of your study. A \$10 late will be added for those registering after the deadline of July 16, 2016.

The fee does NOT include accommodations. Each participant is responsible for his/her motel accommodations. A block of rooms has been reserved at the following motels. Ask for the Mission u block or rooms. QUALITY INN – 797 Business Park Dr. – Prattville, AL - Phone: 334-365-6003 - \$92 per night (includes all taxes and a good breakfast). SLEEP INN – 2295 Cobbs Ford Road – Millbrook, AL- Phone: 334-532-0500 - \$86.50 + \$6 each if more than 2 per room (includes all taxes and good breakfast.

Full School Package \$50 – Choose one study for each day.

Fri/Sat Latin America Fri/Sat Climate Justice Fri/Sat The Bible & Human Sexuality

Friday only \$30 – Choose your study

Saturday only \$30 – Choose your study

Latin America Climate Justice

Climate Justice

The Bible & Human Sexuality

The Bible & Human Sexuality

PLEASE COMPLETE HEALTH FORM ON THE OTHER SIDE

HEALTH FORM AUTHORIZATION
FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

Name _____ DOB _____

Physician's Name _____ Phone _____

Health Insurance Company _____ Policy # _____

Allergies to medications _____

In the event of an emergency, contact: Name _____

Relation _____ Phone _____

In the event emergency medical aid/treatment is required due to illness or injury during my stay at the Mission u Event, I authorize the ALWF Mission u to:

- 1. Secure and retain medical treatment and transportation if needed.
- 2. Release my health information to the authorized individual/agency involved in the medical emergency treatment. I hold harmless the ALWF Conference Mission u, the ALWF Conference, The United Methodist Church and/or the owners of the facility for which the event is taking place for any act or failure to act during a medical emergency.

Consent Signature _____ Date _____

Consent Plan: This authorization includes x-ray, surgery, hospitalization, medication and any treatment procedure deemed "life-saving" by the physician. This provision will only be invoked if the person listed as emergency contact person is unable to be reached. I hold harmless the ALWF Conference Mission u, the ALWF Conference, The United Methodist Church and/or the owners of the facility for which the event is taking place for any act or failure to act during a medical emergency.

Consent Signature: _____ Date _____

Non-Consent Plan: I DO NOT give my consent for emergency medical treatment/aid in the case of illness or injury. In the event emergency treatment/aid is required, I wish the following procedures to take place

I hold harmless the ALWF Conference Mission u, The ALWF Conference, The United Methodist Church and/or the owners of the facility for which the event is taking place for any act or failure to act during a medical emergency.

Consent Signature _____ Date _____

Witness Signature _____ Date _____



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:

Here's What's Happening in 2016!

June July 15-16 AWF Mission Team @ Blue Lake

July 29-30 Mission u @ First UMC Millbrook, Ala.

October 21-22 Fall Event @ Blue Lake



Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Women at the SEJ Meeting in Charleston

Photos by Zan Jones and Lynn
Hamric



***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!**

United Methodist Women
Alabama-West Florida
Conference
Laurel Akin
104 Windwood Lane
Enterprise, AL 36330



SER March 2016

