

Circuit Writer

MAY 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.)

Cancelled

July 24-25: MISSION u



DISTRICT:

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



Next *Circuit Writer*
Deadline:

AUG. 1, 2020
Editor: Deanie DeFelix
deanie575@gmail.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: "Resurrection Reflections"

Hello Ladies,

We've made it through the Lenten season with most of us being tested by an unplanned period of isolation. My prayer is that all of us have taken more time to reflect on the great sacrifice that was made by our Lord to pay for our sins and the Resurrection that gives us Hope in the face of physical death. Our busy plans for the Easter season sometimes distract us from the great joy we should experience in celebrating the miracle of a risen Savior, the One who loved us enough to bear the weight of all of our sin in his sacrificial crucifixion and continues to intercede for us every time we voice a prayer to Him.

Consider the timing of this pandemic during this holiest season for Christianity: how much better we can put ourselves in a similar mindset of Jesus's followers. The sadness and fear they must have felt, the uncertainty of their future, are these not some of the same feelings we've experienced? However, we have a slight advantage in knowing that Jesus won the war against sin and evil; His resurrection gives us the greatest hope possible when we place our faith in Him and love as He taught us to love. Christ's disciples were truly bewildered as they tried to process the apparent hopelessness of their situation, but we are blessed to know what they did not appreciate fully until they encountered their risen Master.

Our sadness in having to cancel/postpone such activities as Moss Hill and the mission study at Marianna pales in comparison to what the early Christians experienced that first Easter. We can be certain, though, that we have not been left alone; we serve a risen Savior, and His Spirit is with us always

In His Service,

Deanie DeFelix



Annual Day Procession of District Banners



Deanie and DS Pennington



From the Secretary's Pen

Janis Johnson



What a challenge! Writing a newsletter article during these “unprecedented” times is just that! My pastor has used that term to describe our current situation many times, and it’s the best word that I can find to describe the days in which we are living.

As I wrote the last article, we were anticipating our annual Day Apart at Moss Hill Church in March. Then several from our district were preparing to attend the Southeast Jurisdiction Quadrennial in Mobile in April. Obviously, those two events, along with many others, were cancelled or postponed. What a disappointment that has been to so many UMW members from the Alabama-West Florida Conference and the entire Southeastern Jurisdiction. Then, the worship services in our own congregations have been changed to live-feed, drive-in, or other alternative ways of joining in worship. Surely, these are “unprecedented” times!

But there is GOOD NEWS! God is showing up in amazing places and ways. The Church has moved outside its four walls in “unprecedented” ways. Worship services on social media are bringing the message of salvation to many who have not entered a sanctuary in a long time. Food distributions are being conducted in many locations by dedicated churches, often in partnership with other community groups. Bible studies, Youth Groups, and Sunday School classes are being conducted using Zoom and other social media applications. Many among us, including me, are learning to use new technology in our efforts to connect with our fellow Christian brothers and sisters. Slowing down and staying home have allowed time to re-connect with our families, to increase our own devotional life and personal worship time, to focus on our relationship with God, to just “be,” rather than always “being” busy.

Sacrifices and difficult decisions are being made by many in our health care professions, first-responders, scientists, national, state, and local leaders, and just ordinary people. They are showing the sacrificial love of Christ as they minister to the sick, the dying, their families and loved ones, in spite of risking their own health and safety. In this time of Pandemic, there appears to be a growing awareness of the need for prayer and a relationship with a loving God and Father.

So, in these “unprecedented” times, we as United Methodist Women have a vital role to play. It’s keeping our eyes and hearts attuned to the circumstances in our own communities, as well as the world around us, and then responding in the ways United Methodist Women always have in times of great need, being the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus as we reach out in the ways we are led by the Holy Spirit to meet the diverse and growing ministry opportunities this pandemic has already caused and will continue to cause.

Blessings to each of you as you do just that and STAY SAFE In His Service,

Janis

Spiritual Growth

Martha Spiva



How the Virus Stole Easter

By Kristi Bothur (With a nod to Dr. Seuss)



Twas late in '19 when the virus began
Bringing chaos and fear to all people, each land.
People were sick, hospitals full,
Doctors overwhelmed, no one in school.
As winter gave way to the promise of spring,
The virus raged on, touching peasant and king.
People hid in their homes from the enemy unseen.
They YouTubed and Zoomed, social-distanced, and cleaned.
April approached and churches were closed.
"There won't be an Easter," the world supposed.
"There won't be church services, and egg hunts are out.
No reason for new dresses when we can't go about."
Holy Week started, as bleak as the rest.
The world was focused on masks and on tests.
"Easter can't happen this year," it proclaimed.
"Online and at home, it just won't be the same."
Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the days came and went.
The virus pressed on; it just would not relent.
The world woke Sunday and nothing had changed.
The virus still menaced, the people, estranged.
"Pooh pooh to the saints," the world was grumbling.
"They're finding out now that no Easter is coming.
"They're just waking up! We know just what they'll do!
Their mouths will hang open a minute or two,
And then all the saints will all cry boo-hoo.
"That noise," said the world, "will be something to hear."
So it paused and the world put a hand to its ear.
And it did hear a sound coming through all the skies.
It started down low, then it started to rise.
But the sound wasn't depressed.
Why, this sound was triumphant!
It couldn't be so!
But it grew with abundance!

The world stared around, popping its eyes.
Then it shook! What it saw was a shocking surprise!
Every saint in every nation, the tall and the small,

Was celebrating Jesus in spite of it all!
It hadn't stopped Easter from coming! It came!
Somehow or other, it came just the same!
And the world with its life quite stuck in quarantine
Stood puzzling and puzzling.

"Just how can it be?"

"It came without bonnets, it came without bunnies,
It came without egg hunts, cantatas, or money."
Then the world thought of something it hadn't before.

"Maybe Easter," it thought, "doesn't come from a
store.

Maybe Easter, perhaps, means a little bit more."

And what happened then?

Well....the story's not done.

What will YOU do?

Will you share with that one

Or two or more people needing hope in this night?

Will you share the source of your life in this fight?

The churches are empty - but so is the tomb,

And Jesus is victor over death, doom, and gloom.

So this year at Easter, let this be our prayer,

As the virus still rages all around, everywhere.

May the world see Hope when it looks at God's people.

May the world see the church is not a building or steeple.

May the world find Faith in Jesus' death and resurrection,

May the world find Joy in a time of dejection.

May 2020 be known as the year of survival,

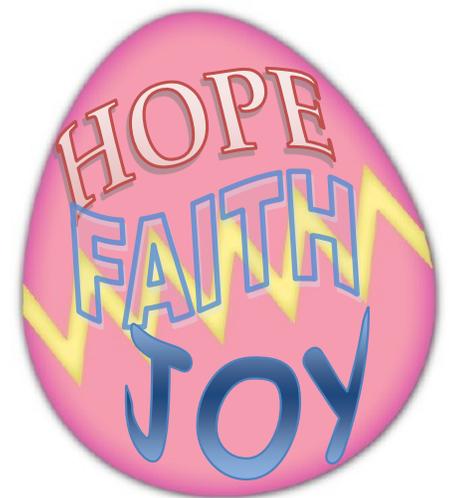
But not only that -

Let it start a revival.

In His service,

Martha Spisa

COVID 19 caused us to lose a beautiful Day Apart at Moss Hill, but our God is stronger. Through our Faith in His power, we will survive and thrive in His Hope for eternity. We rejoice in the assurance of our salvation as evidenced by Jesus' empty tomb. Oh, the JOY we'll share when we see our loved ones again in heaven as we spend eternity with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!



Tidbits from the Treasurer

Peggy Pelt



Dear Ladies:

Our district's executive team has approved the following budget:

Marianna – Panama City UMW District Budget, 2021

Annual Day	\$100
Annual UMC Conference (for District President)	\$200
Assembly/Jurisdiction	\$300*
Audit Review	\$100*
Contingency (Misc.)	\$ 25
Day Apart/Spiritual Enrichment	\$350**
Directory	\$ 0
Mission Study	\$200
Newsletter	\$ 0
Postage/Printing	\$ 0
Resources/Literature	\$ 25
Retiring Officers SMR Pins, Card & Memorials	\$ 80
Scholarships (Mission u & Jurisdiction)	\$ 50
Scholarships (Annual Day & SER)	\$ 50
Training Officers & Workbooks	\$120
Travel (non-district events)	\$ 50
Total	\$1,650

*These are set/required by conference.

This (\$350) is our budget for **Moss Hill Day. It covers the following: **speakers, musical leader, pianist, janitor, and rent** (donation to Moss Hill Foundation).

*Our district pledge for 2020 is \$11,000. I'm confident our 325 members will reach that goal; it would take only \$34 each. Undesignated giving beyond the \$10 Love Offering (sometimes called "conference askings") goes toward the pledge each unit sends to the District Treasurer. As previously noted, a general guide for each member is to pledge \$34 to **any** of the following categories:*

1. *Pledge to Mission*
2. *Special Mission Recognition Pin (minimum \$40)*
3. *Gift to Mission (minimum \$5)*
4. *Gift in Memory (minimum \$5)*
5. *World Thank Offering*

NOTE: Units giving to all 5 earn 5-Star Unit status.

In Christ's Service,

Peggy



ALABAMA-W. FLORIDA CONFERENCE

**Marianna-Panama City District Board
L: Churches' destruction from Michael
R: Disaster Relief from neighboring churches**

SOCIAL ACTION and NOMINATIONS

Karen Fillman



Ladies,

Right now – yes, we have to maintain some distance. It will not be forever, though, and we need your help and prayers for our future work in our ***District United Methodist Women***. Although this year we can't ***act on Nominations***, we ***do have to think about how we all are going to participate once we can get together again in the future.***

Please look at the following information to see who is serving now. For the present, we have asked our current officers and chairs to remain in place until we are able to proceed in a more normal fashion with our work. During this time of uncertainty (both in regard to COVID 19 and to UMC organizational decisions), we need you to ask God to show you ***where you can help***. *We would love your help anywhere you would be willing to serve.*

Our present list of officers: (because of the hurricane, some are holding 2 positions).

President ***and*** Communication Coordinator:

Deanie DeFelix

Vice President:

Verna Roberts

Treasurer:

Peggy Pelt

Secretary:

Janis Johnson

Nominations chair ***and*** Social Action:

Karen Fillman

Program Resources ***and*** Education and Interpretation:

Elizabeth Bell

Membership, Nurture & Outreach:

Kathy McQuagge

Spiritual Growth:

Martha Spiva

Historian (*appointed*):

JoAnn Stone

NOTES: (please consider)

Basic skills and access to use a computer will enhance the quality of leadership of all officers, especially the *President, Secretary, Communications Chair, and Treasurer.*****

These positions, especially, need to be filled in the near future:

- ***Secretary***—*Janis is asking to step down.*
- ***Communications Coordinator***—*Deanie has been doing 2 jobs now.*
- ***Social Action***—*Karen is just filling in the vacancy this year.*

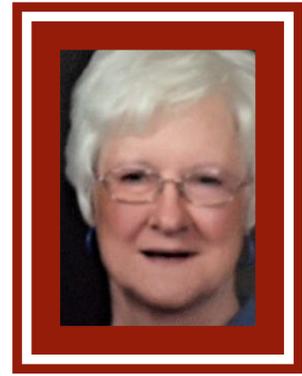
The current Executive Team of the Marianna-Panama City District is committed to providing the training necessary to ease the anxiety of all who feel led to use your talents/gifts for the glory of God through taking a leadership role in our work as United Methodist Women. The challenges we have been facing recently prove that our world needs our help under the direction of Almighty God, whose strength is always with us. Thank you all so much and stay well!

God's blessings,

Karen

PROGRAM RESOURCES and E & I

Elizabeth Bell



I am reading a book in the UMW Reading Program entitled *Easter Stories* which is a compilation of many stories related to Lent and Easter. One of the stories is entitled *Ragman*, and I had heard it many years ago at a UMW Retreat at Blue Lake. I am sharing this story with you during this Easter Season because it is so meaningful to me!

Ragman, by Walter Wangerin, Jr.

I saw a strange sight. I stumbled upon a story most strange, like nothing my life, my street sense, my sly tongue had ever prepared me for.

Hush, child. Hush, now, and I will tell it to you.

Even before the dawn one Friday morning I noticed a young man, handsome and strong, walking the alleys of our City. He was pulling an old cart filled with clothes both bright and new, and he was calling in a clear, tenor voice: "Rags!" Ah, the air was foul and the first light filthy to be crossed by such sweet music.

"Rags! New rags for old! I take your tired rags! Rags!"

"Now, this is a wonder," I thought to myself, for the man stood six-feet-four, and his arms were like tree limbs, hard and muscular, and his eyes flashed intelligence. Could he find no better job than this, to be a ragman in the inner city?

I followed him. My curiosity drove me. And I wasn't disappointed.

Soon the Ragman saw a woman sitting on her back porch. She was sobbing into a handkerchief, sighing, and shedding a thousand tears. Her knees and elbows made a sad X. Her shoulders shook. Her heart was breaking.

The Ragman stopped his cart. Quietly, he walked to the woman, stepping round tin cans, dead toys, and Pampers.

"Give me your rag," he said so gently, "and I'll give you another."

He slipped the handkerchief from her eyes. She looked up, and he laid across her palm a linen cloth so clean and new that it shined. She blinked from the gift to the giver.

Then, as he began to pull his cart again, the Ragman did a strange thing: he put her stained handkerchief to his own face; and then HE began to weep, to sob as grievously as she had done, his shoulders shaking. Yet she was left without a tear.

"This IS a wonder," I breathed to myself, and I followed the sobbing Ragman like a child who cannot turn away from mystery.

"Rags! Rags! New rags for old!"

In a little while, when the sky showed grey behind the rooftops and I could see the shredded curtains hanging out black windows, the Ragman came upon a girl whose head was wrapped in a bandage, whose eyes were empty. Blood soaked her bandage. A single line of blood ran down her cheek.

Now the tall Ragman looked upon this child with pity, and he drew a lovely yellow bonnet from his cart.

“Give me your rag,” he said, tracing his own line on her cheek, “and I’ll give you mine.”

The child could only gaze at him while he loosened the bandage, removed it, and tied it to his own head. The bonnet he set on hers. And I gasped at what I saw: for with the bandage went the wound! Against his brow it ran a darker, more substantial blood – his own!

“Rags! Rags! I take old rags!” cried the sobbing, bleeding, strong, intelligent Ragman.

The sun hurt both the sky, now, and my eyes; the Ragman seemed more and more to hurry.

“Are you going to work?” he asked a man who leaned against a telephone pole. The man shook his head.

The Ragman pressed him: “Do you have a job?”

“Are you crazy?” sneered the other. He pulled away from the pole, revealing the right sleeve of his jacket – flat, the cuff stuffed into the pocket. He had no arm.

“So,” said the Ragman. “Give me your jacket, and I’ll give you mine.”

Such quiet authority in his voice!

The one-armed man took off his jacket. So did the Ragman – and I trembled at what I saw: for the Ragman’s arm stayed in its sleeve, and when the other put it on he had two good arms, thick as tree limbs; but the Ragman had only one.

“Go to work,” he said.

After that he found a drunk, lying unconscious beneath an army blanket, an old man, hunched, wizened, and sick. He took that blanket and wrapped it round himself, but for the drunk he left new clothes.

And now I had to run to keep up with the Ragman. Though he was weeping uncontrollably, and bleeding freely at the forehead, pulling his cart with one arm, stumbling for drunkenness, falling again and again, exhausted, old, old, and sick, yet he went with terrible speed. On spider’s legs he skittered through the alleys of the City, this mile and the next, until he came to its limits, and then he rushed beyond.

I wept to see the change in this man. I hurt to see his sorrow. And yet I needed to see where he was going in such haste, perhaps to know what drove him so.

The little old Ragman – he came to a landfill. He came to the garbage pits. And then I wanted to help him in what he did, but I hung back, hiding. He climbed a hill. With tormented labor he cleared a little space on that hill. Then he sighed. He lay down. He pillowed his head on a handkerchief and a jacket. He covered his bones with an army blanket. And he died.

Oh, how I cried to witness that death! I slumped in a junked car and wailed and mourned as one who has no hope – because I had come to love the Ragman. Every other face had faded in the wonder of this man, and I cherished him; but he died. I sobbed myself to sleep.

I did not know – how could I know? – that I slept through Friday night and Saturday and its night, too.

But then, on Sunday morning, I was wakened by a violence.

Light – pure, hard, demanding light – slammed against my sour face, and I blinked, and I looked, and I saw the last and the first wonder of all. There was the Ragman, folding the blanket most carefully, a scar on his forehead, but alive! And, besides that, healthy! There was no sign of sorrow nor of age, and all the rags that he had gathered shined for cleanliness.

Well, then I lowered my head and trembling for all that I had seen, I myself walked up to the Ragman. I told him my name with shame, for I was a sorry figure next to him. Then I took off all my clothes in that place, and I said to him with dear yearning in my voice: “Dress me.”

He dressed me. My Lord, he put new rags on me, and I am a wonder beside him. The Ragman, the Ragman, the Christ!

<http://www.inspirationalarchive.com/573/ragman/#ixzz6JJYb9v3p>



We Remember



Frances Burgess

Charmein Cretney

Sarah Goskin

Margaret K. Lewis

Donna McCrea

Margie Miller

Euvene Sanders

Margaret Sanders

Hortense Thurman

Kathleen B. Turner

Nita Wallace

Jane Wetzal

Angeline Santos Whitfield

Pat Whitley

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

Revelation 21:4 (NKJV)