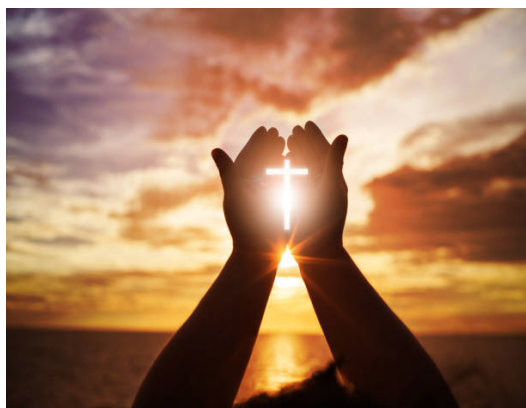




# THE PHOENIX

## GREATER DETROIT DISTRICT

### SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER



## SISTERHOOD OF GRACE COVENANT

We are a sisterhood of grace. As a community of women organized for mission it is important that we be the creative, supportive fellowship espoused in our Purpose. In that spirit, we offer this covenant as a guideline for interactions in our programs. These ground rules provide us with a framework to ensure that dialogue and participation is open, respectful and brave as we share pray, learn and listen together.

### President



#### Struggling to Remain Hopeful...but God is Able

It has been a busy time with the Greater Detroit District of United Methodist Women. We have a lot to celebrate. We are learning to Zoom. Our February 13, 2021, Prayer Gathering with Rev. Ava Euper was widely viewed. We even had a few gentlemen and a few friends of Ava's outside the District to listen to her message, "Amazing Grace". Yes, we will be more conscious of God's amazing grace in our lives. The Mission/Ministry Workshop on "Human Trafficking: What YOU Don't Know and What You Should Know," presented by Jessica B. Marcetti, Manager, Volunteer Resources at Vista Maria, was educational and heart-wrenching. Vista

Maria provides shelter and social services for young women who have escaped trafficking. We were reminded that human trafficking is not limited to sex and is a modern-day form of slavery.

April 30 – May 1, 2021, we held our Spiritual Life Retreat at the Lake Huron Retreat Center. The Spiritual Life Retreat had been postponed for the last two years. Led by Mrs. Nichea VerVeer Guy, 27 people gathered to weave bonds of hope and to knit into a community where hope and love permeate our mission as United Methodist Women members. We were spatially distanced and observant of COVID-19 protocols. We had two younger members from Roseville Trinity and six women who are not affiliated with a United Methodist Women Unit.

Here are just a few photos from the Spiritual Life Retreat



**Jeanette Harris**  
[Jharris48@yahoo.com](mailto:Jharris48@yahoo.com)  
248.752.7147

## Treasurer

Many of you support Special Mission Recognition by purchasing pins for someone you want to honor. The National Office of the United Methodist Women has made some changes. Previously, the company that supplied the pins would also send a special certificate with the pin with the honoree's name and the name of the sender. Now, the company no longer sends a certificate along with the pin. The company is only interested in who they should mail the pin to. Therefore, if you send someone a pin, you must also contact that person to let them know you are honoring them with the gift. Each Unit Treasurer has a template of the certificate. If not, please contact me. The Unit Treasurer must now

print the certificate, if the person is interested in still receiving it. We will continue to recognize all honorees, 5-Star Persons, and 5-Star Units at the annual meeting, and in addition they are also recognized by the Michigan Conference UMW.

Our GDD UMW Annual Meeting is right around the corner. I would appreciate all 5-Star Person requests by the end of September. This allows sufficient time for me to type my report and send it to the person responsible for gathering all the reports for the meeting. Each year I have noticed a steady decline in 5-Star participants, and this has also resulted in an overall decline in the monies the Greater Detroit District UMW sends to the Michigan Conference. A few churches have closed and many churches no longer have UMW Units. The needs of women and children here and around the world have not declined, so we continue to need and welcome your support. Ten dollars may seem small to women in the United States but to women and children in other parts of the world, ten dollars will do awesome things.

We thank every UMW Unit and person who continues to support the United Methodist Women. Make checks payable to Greater Detroit District UMW and mail to me.

**Viola Jones**

3975 Cornerstone Drive  
Canton, Michigan 48188  
[jonesaja342@yahoo.com](mailto:jonesaja342@yahoo.com)  
734.221.5478

## Co-Communications Coordinators

Here are some thoughtful questions on “good” that comes from “bad”:

- Are you finding communications by internet easier?
- Are you more active in participating in groups via the internet?
- Do you want your church to still have Sunday Worship services conducted on it? Better yet, in-person **and** on the internet?
- Who knew that globalization would extend to viruses and shared science for vaccines?
- Did you experience unexpected bonuses while being lock-downed?
- Did you spend time looking inward to your spiritual needs and growth?
- Did you take inventory of your pre-pandemic activities and acquaintances and decide to drop some of them?
- Did you discover new interests to pursue?
- Did you appreciate your family members, near and far, more?

### Websites Every United Methodist Women Member Should Know

We include these websites in each issue of *The Phoenix* because we think they are valuable resources. These are websites you should bookmark in your “favorites” list. There is a wealth of information within each one. Be sure to visit them on a regular basis so you can keep up with the great work of United Methodist Women!

*National*

<http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/>

*Michigan Conference United Methodist Women*

[www.umwmichiganconference.org](http://www.umwmichiganconference.org)

Once you open the page, you can scroll down to the Greater Detroit District.

*Facebook Page*

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/MichiganUMW/groups/>

*Reading Program*

<http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/readingprogram>

MIConnect

[http://news.michiganumc.org/.](http://news.michiganumc.org/)

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313.303.9536

## **Laity News from The Michigan Annual Conference**

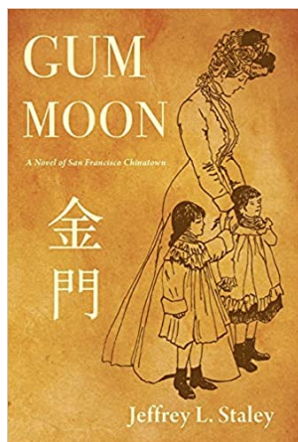
At the conference there was a special session for laity. During that special session, we were reminded that laity is “called” to the mission of the church. Keynote speaker Derrick Scott III (preaching from the Campus to City Wesley Foundation in Jacksonville, FL) delivered a powerful message of “Being **More** Than a Lay Person”. The entire laity session can be found at <https://fb.watch/60zOg5xUe8/> (press Control + Link). If you cannot take time to watch the entire session, please listen to Derrick at 19:19 on the video. Also, you can go online at <http://michiganumc.org> to read about the resolutions and to hear more Michigan Conference news.

As laity members, we are encouraged to discern our gifts, to get involved and to not be afraid to fail. Work for justice and mercy. Support each other and take care of ourselves.

**Jeanette Harris**

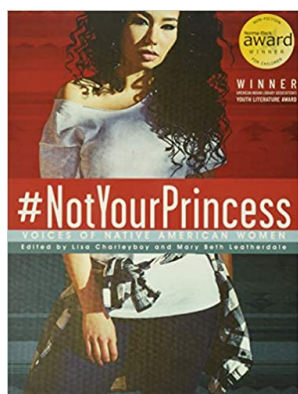
## Book Reviews

The 2021 United Methodist Women reading list has a wide range of titles that should appeal to all readers. Be sure to go to the Reading Resources website (<http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/readingprogram>) for information on how to participate in the reading program as well as see the titles with a brief synopsis of each. Here are just two of this year's books:



Based upon events in the life of the author's wife's grandmother, **Gum Moon** (Cantonese for "Gold Door" or "Golden Gate") by Jeffery Staley is the remarkable coming of age story of a Chinese American girl, Mei Chun Lai, who is sold in 1898 at the age of three to a cruel brothel keeper. A sympathetic prostitute befriends Chun, but during a plague quarantine, Chun is thrust into a bewildering new world when she is rescued and placed in a home for abused and trafficked girls. The home is destroyed in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, but Chun (aka "Maud") survives. To raise funds to rebuild the home, Maud and a group of seven other Chinese children embark on a cross-country singing tour. Performing for President Theodore Roosevelt is the highlight of the journey, but when the matron of the home suffers a breakdown, thirteen-year-old Maud must find within herself the strength and resolve to lead

the band of children home.



Whether looking back to a troubled past or welcoming a hopeful future, the powerful voices of Indigenous women across North America resound in this book. **#NotYourPrincess** presents an eclectic collection of poems, essays, interviews and art that combine to express the experience of being a Native woman. Stories of abuse, humiliation, and stereotyping are countered by the voices of passionate women making themselves heard and demanding change. Sometimes angry, often reflective, but always strong, the women in this book will give teen readers (and older readers!) insight into the lives of women who, for so long, have been virtually invisible.

## News From UMW Units

We love including activities and events from different UMW units so please send in your stories (and photos) to Anne and Kris (Co-Communications Coordinators) for inclusion in each issue of *The Phoenix*.

### Detroit Metropolitan United Methodist Women

Like many others, we met through Zoom while we tried to stay connected during these trying times. We are looking forward to seeing each other on a regular basis now that we are fully vaccinated, and the world has opened.



Since January 2021, our unit has been able to support several metro Detroit organizations serving children, women and families. Grants through our Rice Allen Fund were awarded to:

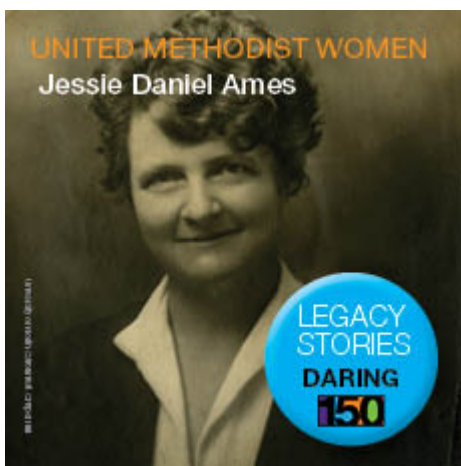
- Alternatives for Girls
- Children's Center
- Global Detroit
- Mercy Education Project
- Motown Mission
- Sugar Crush Summer Camp
- Support for Detroit Homeless Students
- Vista Maria
- Women, Children and Families United

We were also able to fund Metropolitan UMC's Christmas Box program for young children, along with supporting homes in our neighborhood that are serving developmentally disabled adults.

For many years, Metropolitan has collected loose change during any 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday and given these funds to our UMW unit. Even though the church has yet to open for weekly worship services, several of our members met individuals in the parking lot as they drove by with donations of change, cash and checks for May's 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday. Thanks to their generosity, we collected \$700 that, in turn, we donated to the Downtown Boxing Gym Youth Program. Many thanks!

## Legacy Stories

### Lynching Is an Indefensible Crime: Jessie Daniel Ames



**Daring:** In 1930 Methodist woman Jessie Daniel Ames gathered a small group of **daring** women together in Atlanta, Georgia, to form the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching.

The protection of white women had been a common excuse for white mob lynchings of black men, and so the women were determined to use the power of their mission societies to stop this terrorism in their names. The women drafted a statement saying, "*Lynching is an indefensible crime. Women dare no longer allow themselves to be the cloak behind which those bent upon personal revenge and savagery commit acts of violence and lawlessness in the name of women. We repudiate this disgraceful claim for all time.*"

By 1937, 109 women's organizations representing more than 4 million women had joined in the campaign. One of the association's most prominent endorsing groups was the Woman's Missionary Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, one of United Methodist Women's predecessors. Bertha Payne Newell, superintendent of the Woman's Missionary Council's Bureau of Christian Social Relations, served as secretary of the association. <https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/lynching-is-an-indefensible-crime-jessie-daniel-ames>

## Community Membership Outreach

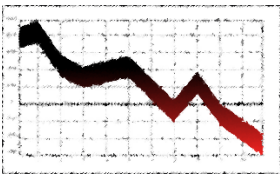


United Methodist Women is a supportive community. Members develop relationships at all levels of the organization, but especially locally. United Methodist Women is not a social club - it is an organization of women who seek to know God more fully and to participate in mission.

How can we invite more women to join us - even if they are not members of a unit at a local church or even a United Methodist? The Greater Detroit District is scheduling a meeting to discuss how we can engage more women to do more service. If you are interested, please contact GDD President Jeanette Harris at

248.752.7147 or [jharris48@yahoo.com](mailto:jharris48@yahoo.com).

## In The Red and Going Down



This graph illustrates the status of the Greater Detroit District's pledge contributions. Pledges from local units have declined drastically in the last year. The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced our face-to-face interactions and the declining number of women financially supporting United Methodist Women activities has plummeted.

Zoom technology has eliminated registration fees and mileage costs to attend District events. One unit, Detroit Second Grace United Methodist Women, provided a financial contribution during one of the online meetings. This donation is greatly appreciated. It is hoped that other units will contribute in lieu of registration fees. We are asking each unit to make a donation of \$10 per person per event.

Checks should be mailed to our GDD Treasurer: Viola Jones, 3975 Cornerstone Drive, Canton, MI 48188.

Thank you in advance for your gifts.

## Steps Toward Anti-Bias/Anti-Racism

Bishop Bard issued the following challenge on June 4, 2021, during the Michigan Annual Conference:

*“I invite every Michigan United Methodist congregation to engage in a study in the coming year dealing with intercultural competence, racism, or racial reckoning.”*

As individual churches, we have an obligation to be a healing force within our culture. The work of healing is preceded by the work of justice, and justice requires that we critically examine existing power structures and unequal relationships between racial groups to understand our role in these. In order to guide the churches in the Michigan Conference in the work of addressing racism, Bishop Bard has formed a working group to respond and take seriously a call to address the ways we perpetuate bias and racism.

The hope of Bishop Bard’s challenge is to move the Michigan Conference more decidedly in the direction of the Beloved Community, which the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. described as requiring “a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.” The hope is that all churches within the Michigan Conference will join in this work of creating a new kind of community in Jesus Christ—one that dismantles racism, breaks down dividing walls, and serves as a healing force in our divided world.

To learn more and to get the link to resources including the United Methodist Women Manual for Racial Justice, Ctrl+Click on the link below:

[https://michiganumc.org/take-steps-toward-anti-bias-anti-racism/?utm\\_source=%2AMichigan+Conference+Communication+List&utm\\_campaign=3b1f6ef4dc-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_08\\_01\\_02\\_55\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_98bd0b5296-3b1f6ef4dc-411944176](https://michiganumc.org/take-steps-toward-anti-bias-anti-racism/?utm_source=%2AMichigan+Conference+Communication+List&utm_campaign=3b1f6ef4dc-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_08_01_02_55_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_98bd0b5296-3b1f6ef4dc-411944176)

Submitted by Jeanette Harris  
Detroit Metropolitan United Methodist Women

## United Methodist Women Celebrates New Juneteenth Federal Holiday



*Sculpture of a freedwoman’s hand by Adrienne Isom, part of the Juneteenth Memorial Sculpture Monument at the Carver Museum in Austin, Texas.*

United Methodist Women acknowledges with gratitude the signing into law of the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, adopted with overwhelming bipartisan support in both houses of Congress. The new federal holiday commemorates June 19, 1865, the day when enslaved African Americans in Galveston, Texas, learned they were freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, two years after President Abraham Lincoln signed it into law.

Juneteenth, also known as Black Independence Day and Day of Jubilee, is American history not taught in most U.S. public schools. This event, the Tulsa Race Massacre, and many other currently omitted parts of our history must be included in the curriculum so that we as Americans know our full story, the struggles of our forebearers that brought us to where we are today, and the work we must do today to live into our national pledge of liberty and justice for all.



The bipartisan support for the Juneteenth federal holiday is an encouraging sign that our leaders are open to acknowledging our nation's true history — in its full racial diversity, injustices and all — which is a requisite part of our ongoing journey to create a more perfect union together. As women of faith, we know the importance of telling the whole story as a foundation for making needed changes in our own community and in the broader society. We pray that the Juneteenth federal holiday will undergird our nation's commitment to the ongoing work for racial justice. Our faith in Jesus' promise that "the truth will set you free" helps us persist in this work — even when the whole story is difficult to face. May this be a step toward policies that ensure racial justice.

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/united-methodist-women-celebrates-new-juneteenth-federal-holiday> Posted or updated: 6/18/2021

## **Metropolitan United Methodist Church will be in Mission with Motown Mission**

Motown Mission is an urban work mission destination in Detroit for Christian youth, college and adult groups interested in economic disaster recovery work in the name of Jesus Christ. Deeply rooted in Wesleyan Theology, Motown Mission began as a United Methodist organization and continues to maintain the connection to the contemporary UMC's commitment to grace, mission and service as a means for individual and communal transformation.

Groups of individuals have been engaged in economic disaster recovery work projects. Motown Mission partners with home repair agencies in the Joy-Southfield, Brightmoor, and Wyoming-Plymouth neighborhoods of Detroit. These partners prepare lists of work projects, homeowners and other volunteers. Other partner organizations include feeding and greening ministries like the NOAH Project at Detroit Central Methodist Church, Michigan Urban Farming Initiative and more.



On Friday, July 23, and Saturday, July 24, Motown Mission has identified work projects and they need volunteers.

Friday, July 25, will consist of a service day for those who desire a less strenuous service opportunity. Mission Volunteers will be working with Arts and Scraps (located at 16135 Harper Avenue, Detroit, MI 48224). Saturday, July 26, will be more physically challenging, and details will be forthcoming.

Motown Mission asks that volunteers register and contribute a fee of \$50 per day. The minimum age to volunteer is 12. There are a limited number of mission volunteer slots available. Sunday, July 18, is the deadline for registration and payment. There is a volunteer and medical release form that needs to be completed as well.

For more information, contact Jeanette Harris, Lay Leader, at (248) 752-7147 or email her at [jharris48@yahoo.com](mailto:jharris48@yahoo.com).

## **Challenging Hosting the 2022 Assembly in Orlando, Florida**

Many of our Greater Detroit District members have been concerned about efforts of various state legislatures to pass laws that restrict access to voting by people of color. After much discussion and

prayer, the following letter was sent to Harriett Jane Olson, General Secretary of the national United Methodist Women, and its Board of Directors.

*May 20, 2021*

*Dear Harriett Jane Olson, General Secretary  
Board of Directors and Staff of United Methodist Women:*

*The United Methodist Women of the Michigan Conference are alarmed by the efforts of state legislatures to pass laws which are clearly designed to restrict the votes of African Americans. The voter suppression laws passed in the name of “preventing voter fraud” are a solution in search of a problem which does not exist. While many states legislatures are considering the passage of such laws, on April 29, Florida passed S.B. 90 which includes restrictions on vote-by-mail, ballot drop-boxes, and third-party voter registration organizations, among others.*

*While Orlando, Florida was chosen by United Methodist Women for the site of our 2022 Assembly because it met our green energy requirements, one of our social action priorities, we believe it should now be rejected because the state’s laws do not meet our racial justice requirements. We understand that a change such as this will be costly, inconvenient, and an administrative nightmare, but United Methodist Women have a long history of working for racial justice. The decisions our predecessors made were not easy in the eyes of the world, but right in the eyes of God. We have a responsibility to all those women who came before us and all those women who will come after to carry on this legacy of fighting for racial justice.*

*As United Methodist Women in the Michigan Conference:*

*We believe that Racial Justice is a biblical issue, a leadership issue, a community issue AND a public-policy issue as stated in our “Living the Charter” from our Charter for Racial Justice. We believe United Methodist Women need to fundamentally support equal voting rights for ALL Americans.*

*We believe that United Methodist Women need to collectively take action to change unjust systems and where we spend our money can be an important instrument for change.*

*We appreciate your prayerful consideration of this issue.*

*Together in Mission,*

*Julia Paradine-Rice  
President, Michigan Conference UMW*

*Jeanette Harris  
President, Greater Detroit District UMW*

Ms. Olson responded with the following letter:



*June 22, 2021*

*Julia Paradine-Rice  
President, Michigan Conference United Methodists*

*Jeanette Harris  
President, Greater Detroit District United Methodist Women*

*Dear sisters,*

*Thank you for sharing your concerns about the hosting United Methodist Women's 2022 Assembly in Florida. I share your alarm over Florida's recent adoption of legislation which is billed as an action to "prevent voter fraud" but in fact clearly intends to suppress the vote, particularly of Black and other voters in communities of color.*

*We share your concerns about the importance of acting to protecting the right to vote and standing against anti—democratic laws. We are currently consulting with partners to determine the most effective action we can take.*

*However, there are also many reasons why, at this point in time, we cannot relocate Assembly. For one thing, very high financial liabilities would be incurred should we break legally binding contracts already executed with the convention center, contractors, and surrounding hotels. We do not believe that this is the most impactful way to expend Mission Giving funds in our advocacy for voting rights.*

*The second reason is even more troubling, as the problem is not contained to Florida. As I'm sure you know, similar bills aimed at making it harder for eligible persons to vote and easier for state legislatures to overturn the results of elections have been introduced in 48 of our 50 states because of the false narrative of widespread fraud in the 2020 elections.*

*We have also been in conversation with Florida Conference United Methodist Women leaders about these issues. They are equally concerned about the voter suppression laws adopted in their state. They are urging United Methodist Women to show support for Floridians organizing against these and other repressive laws. I'd like to share with you some of their comments.*

*Florida Conference President, Deaconess Judith Pierre-Okerson said: "We acknowledge there are many social injustices in Florida, and we are not proud of any of them. However ... we believe the 2022 Assembly in Florida will be a catalyst for more women to join us in our quest for justice for the oppressed and the deprived. Assembly in Orlando will bring visibility to our work as we stand together strong for justice for women, children, and youth."*

*Florida Conference Treasurer Donna Spear said: "Orange County, the site of the 2022 Assembly, is with the Tampa area a stronghold of the people pushing back on voter suppression, gun violence and all sort of injustices. Assembly will take place in the epicenter of hope for the State of Florida.*

*Assembly will be an opportunity for United Methodist Women in the so called I-4 Corridor, to show their community they have nationwide support in their effort to make a positive change in the state.”*

*Florida Conference Social Action Liaison Edith Zewadski-Bricker said: “There are so many reasons for faithful people to want to stay away from the State of Florida. Among others, Florida has made it legal to run your car into a crowd of protestors, the State of Florida ‘serves’ the mentally ill through the criminal justice system, which destroys lives and has serious racial injustice ramifications. These and so many more reasons support the idea of moving Assembly 2022 to another state. But I contend that having Assembly in Florida gives us a chance to highlight these injustices and take advantage of the fact that more members of United Methodist Women from Florida will be in attendance if we hold the event here. Assembly 2020 in Orlando will give us the opportunity to be a change agent within the state.”*

*We will announce how United Methodist Women will support local leaders working against voter suppression laws when our actions are solidified.*

*Thanks so much for reaching out with this concern about how we act to defend voting rights for all at this critical time.*

*God bless you and the United Methodist Women of Michigan.*



Harriett J. Olson  
General Secretary/CEO  
United Methodist Women

## **ONGOING SOCIAL ACTION: CONSISTENT AND FAITHFUL WITNESSES**

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. (Hebrews 12:1-3, NRSV)*

As we seek to be faithful to God’s call in this time and place, we must deepen our collective resolve to work together for racial justice. As followers of Jesus, we cannot engage with racial justice only when doing so is “trendy.” Racial justice is not a fad that started in 2020 only to fade out in 2021, nor is it just another meme-able identity marker in so-called “culture wars.” Rather, racial justice is a necessary part of the substantive call of discipleship, part of who we are called to be – day after day, year after year. This requires long-term faithfulness – fidelity to our relationship with God and fidelity to the task to which God has called us.

When it comes to the ongoing work of racial justice, we may “*grow weary*” and we may indeed even “*lose heart*,” despite the Biblical exhortation not to do so. This is understandable. It is tiresome to fight the same fights day after day. It can be exhausting to argue and re-argue the cause of racial justice, seemingly without much reward for the work. Our efforts to move our institutions, our communities, our country, and even our own selves can seem, at times, like they just aren’t bearing the fruit for which we hope on the timeline which we need. Feelings of frustration and/or fatigue can go from occasional interruptions to lingering companions. Despair, disgust, and/or depression may hover as background temptations for even the most committed Christian.

### **READ: “Overturn Dylann Roof’s Death Sentence — for Me, Not for Him”**

Consider, for example, the criminal justice system:

- Ma’Khia Byrant was killed by police *on the very same day* that the verdict was announced against Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd. Last year, nearly a thousand people – or perhaps even more than a thousand, depending on how you count – were killed by police. The victims were disproportionately Black.
- People of color are policed more harshly than white people. After arrest, Black and Latinx people are given worse plea deals. This is part of a broader system that Michelle Alexander has accurately named “the new Jim Crow.”
- This does not just impact adults. Youth of color are substantially more likely to be incarcerated than white youth (Black youth five times more likely, Native American youth three times more likely, and Latinx youth 42% more likely).
- Unsurprisingly, students of color are more likely to be in schools with police on-site – and more likely to be subjected to school-based arrests.
- In fact, discipline disparities by race appear at *all* levels of school discipline – from suspensions and expulsions to law enforcement referrals and arrests.
- Research on adultification bias reveals that adults see Black girls as “less innocent” than their white peers as early as age five.

Racial injustice can be found at *almost every level* of the policing/legal/carceral system. Systemic racism has long been a reality in our country, the deep legacy of settler-colonialism, slavery, and white supremacy. As we increasingly wrestle with our national history—and how it has shaped our national present—we move closer to a necessary reckoning, a process of accountability and transformation. Such a possibility, of course, inspires backlash. We see this in myriad recent state-level efforts to limit the accurate teaching of American history and prohibit the careful study of racism’s systemic/structural manifestations. As Christians, we must develop the inner strength to stay with uncomfortable truths, knowing that they provide us a path to learn, wrestle, and grow better together. Truth-telling about America’s racial history—and racial present—should be welcomed, not feared.

As we explore our history more deeply and more honestly, we encounter not just villainous behaviors but deeply honorable and heroic acts, as well. We are invited to see not only the ugliness of American



racism but also the incredible power of American antiracist movements. We are invited to confession, yes, but also, ultimately, to hope.

The challenges we face are not new – and we are not alone in facing those challenges. Rather, we are surrounded by *“so great a cloud of witnesses.”* Indeed, as I contemplate the work of those who have come before, I marvel not just at the fact of their accomplishments but at their dedication, vision, and fortitude in the face of such enormous odds. We are truly surrounded by a gaggle of saints—both living and dead—cheering us on.

It is our turn, now, to put our full weight into the work before us—not just for a week or a year, but for as long as it takes — *“running – or walking or wheeling— with perseverance the race that is set before us.”*

By Emily Jones, <https://www.redletterchristians.org/consistent-and-faithful-witnesses/>

## United Methodist Women Members Share Hopes Regarding President Biden’s Virtual Climate Summit And Nationally Determined Contributions



*Wind farm in Northern California*

Following President Joe Biden’s virtual climate summit on April 22 and 23, where he set Nationally Determined Contributions, several members of United Methodist Women expressed their hopes for an equitable transition to renewable energy. Their comments, highlighted below, come just days after the organization held virtual legislative advocacy days where over 300 United Methodist Women leaders and friends from 40 states had over 80 Congressional visits across party lines and urged Congress to take action to address the climate crisis. United Methodist Women is a

national women’s faith-based organization of 800,000 members. The group works to support policies and programs that benefit women, children and youth around the world.

“As women of faith, we are called to speak out for all of God’s children and be good stewards of creation,” said Elizabeth Chun Hye Lee, United Methodist Women executive for environmental and economic justice, and climate justice lead. “That is why over 300 United Methodist Women members and friends from 40 states recently met with Congressional offices to ask them to pass infrastructure and energy legislation targeting 70% greenhouse gas emissions reductions by 2030 and 100% by 2050 economy-wide that prioritizes climate justice through a just and equitable transition.”

Even as scientists, business leaders and other environmentalist groups urge Biden to set an aggressive 2030 goal, United Methodist Women is urging that workers and frontline communities be equitably included in the transition to truly clean renewable energy.

“Our faith guides us to care for God’s creation as well as whom the Bible calls the ‘least of these,’” Lee said. “The production, transportation, and combustion of fossil fuels are causing extreme and catastrophic changes to the planet’s climate system and harming the health of women and children in the U.S. and around the world. Currently, 80 % of the energy consumed in the U.S. comes from fossil fuels, but we must urgently transition to a 100 % renewable energy economy across all sectors that is centered on equity and justice. The Biden Administration has pledged to reduce

emissions by 50-52 % by 2030, but the science is clear that to stay under 1.5C U.S. emissions reduction must be more ambitious. The U.S. is the largest historic polluter of greenhouse gas emissions, and as women of faith we urge the Biden Administration and Congress to commit to its fair share and pledge to reduce emissions by 70% by 2030 using only truly clean energy sources like solar and wind.”

Below, please find comments from several members of United Methodist Women from West Virginia, Indiana, Colorado, Florida and Iowa:

- “These issues are important for the health of our country and by acting on them Congress shows their concern for their constituents,” said Elizabeth Bailes of Ravenswood, West Virginia. She is a United Methodist Women social action coordinator for the West Virginia Conference of UMW.
- The impact of climate change affects ALL of us and we must all urgently act to reduce carbon emissions,” said Jana Jones from Centennial, Colorado and United Methodist Women national director. “This is a shared individual, corporate, and government responsibility. We need Congress to enact legislation that moves our country to use 100% renewable energy, move to a clean transportation system and provide a just transition to these goals which will impact workers and frontline, marginalized communities.”
- “We ask our elected officials to: ‘Support only energy sources that are renewable, such as wind and solar, and avoid energy sources that have adverse health, climate, environmental and societal impacts such as nuclear and burning of wood chips, wood pellets, solid waste, or construction and demolition debris,’” said Pamela Davis from Deerfield Beach, Florida. She is the Florida Conference United Methodist Women dean of Mission u.
- “We know that moving to 100% renewable energy with adequate infrastructure involves a big cost, but many people and communities are already paying the costs of not going forward now in terms of impacts from fossil fuels,” said Rita Carter from Windsor Heights, Iowa. She is a local unit United Methodist Women president and member of UMW’s national Program Advisory Group.
- “Congress must work together and make it a bi-partisan effort to solve our climate change issues. We want to be 100% renewable as quickly as possible,” said Lori Chambers from Westfield, Indiana and United Methodist Women president for Indiana Central District.

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/news/united-methodist-women-members-share-hopes-regarding-virtual-climate-summit>

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Saturday, October 2, 2021** -- Hands4Detroit – Partner with Black churches in Detroit as “We Lift Every Voice and Sing”

**Saturday, October 9, 2021** -- Greater Detroit District United Methodist Women Annual Meeting (Zoom). Please note request for donations in this issue.

**Monday – Tuesday, October 18-19, 2021** -- Mission u of the North, Gaylord UMC (see the flyer below)

**Saturday, February 12, 2022** -- Prayer Breakfast, Speaker will be Pastor Monique French, Battle Creek Washington Heights UMC, Greater Southwest District

**Saturday, March 12, 2022** – Mission Workshop

**Friday - Saturday, April 1-2, 2022** -- Spiritual Life Retreat – Lake Huron Retreat Center



## Mission u

# There's Far More Here THAN MEETS THE EYE

*So we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without [God's] unfolding grace. [...] There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever.*

2 Corinthians 4:16-18, The Message (MSG)

We have known and felt what it is like when “things are falling apart on us.” We have experienced a great unraveling that has shifted, quite literally, everything.

Could there be, as 2 Corinthians put it, “far more here than meets the eye”?

**Mission u**, like many activities in our lives, has moved online. While virtual, we are still creating spaces for spiritual community, lifelong friendships, lessons that change us and our communities, and spiritual practices that arrive when we need them most. In a time when it looks like things are falling apart on us, God's grace is still unfolding and life is being made new.

Indeed: There's far more here than meets the eye.

Will you join us?

At our upcoming **Mission u**, we will examine anxiety, the culture of violence that impacts children in and out of schools, and how we as God's people can deepen our moral witness and respond faithfully. Join us:

Available Now: **Finding Peace in an Anxious World**, edited by Erin James-Brown taught by Rev. Dr.

Devon Herrell at: <https://www.umwmichiganconference.org/MissionuVideos.html>

July 9-10, 2021. VIRTUAL: **Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools** by Monique Morris (FREE). This study will be led by Sharon Appling and Rev. Dale Milford

August 13-14, 2021. VIRTUAL: **Bearing Witness in the Kin-dom: Living Into the Church's Moral Witness Through Radical Discipleship** By Darryl W. Stephens. This study will be led by Rev. Kennetha Brigham-Tsai

October 18-19, 2021: Mission u of the North, Gaylord UMC – \$70.

Payable to: Mission u. Lodging is on your own.

RSVP: <https://michiganconferencemissionu.square.site/>

Or email to: [MIMissionu@gmail.com](mailto:MIMissionu@gmail.com) Name, District, Church, and Dates attending.

Mail check/info to: Sally Messner, 124 Boyd Street, Fife Lake, MI 49633