

Heritage Vine

The Newsletter of the Heritage District
United Methodist Women
April 2021



United
Methodist
Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

President's Note

It is in Christian Love that I greet all of my Sisters in the Heritage District and I hope all of you have survived the past year! It is hard to believe we may be on the other side of this pandemic but I certainly hope so. It is through hope that we can believe!

I recently watched a short video by Harriett Olsen, UMW General Secretary and she said, "Now is the Time, this is not the time to sit down or rest, this is the time to be Bold." I have included the link so you can also see what she had to say.
<https://www.facebook.com/UMWomen/videos/418184652082908/?t=63>



At a recent Board of Director's meeting for United Methodist Women, National President 'Ainise 'Isama'u said: "We are intent on lifting up the voices of marginalized persons, especially women, children, and youth, as they describe the impact of unjust systems," said 'Isama'u in her report. "We are intent on answering God's call to advocate, serve and respond in faith, even in the face of today's obstacles."

"Be bold in your space," 'Isama'u instructed as she closed the meeting. "Be bold wherever you go. We are here, and we are not going anywhere."

I have quoted these brave and courageous women in hopes that you can see beyond what has been happening over the past year. Maybe you have remained a vital unit of organized women and have been helping in many ways during the pandemic but I have heard from many of our units that they are not meeting. I pray that as you read this if your unit is not meeting, you will step out on faith and be the one to make it happen. After all, we are *Bold and Courageous Women* (Assembly 2018).

I wanted to share something our program person, Sue Smith, did for our unit meeting at Erie. It is the closing Litany from the UMW Program Book for April 2021.

Knitted Together for God's Work

One voice: merciful and gracious God, who knows the sparrow and the lily by name.

Many voices: **Assure us that we are your precious children, given freedom as whole person in Christ.**

One Voice: Break through our fears, our discouragement, our hesitations.

Many voices: **Fill us with the Spirit that we may show courage, persistence and joy in the days ahead.**

One voice: Here, we honor the gifts that you have given us, Eternal Creator.

Many voices: **Build us into your beloved community. Bless us with your wisdom that we may be empowered to share the good news of your salvation.**

One voice: Though each if us is but one strand in the tapestry of your world,

Many voices: **Knit us together into the beautiful body of Christ, to share with the world, so that all may know your mercy and grace. Bind us together, Lord. Amen**

This is what we the United Methodist Women in the Heritage District are, Knitted together on God's love!

President's Note (con't)

Things to look forward to:

September 25: Annual Celebration & Meeting at Saline First UMC. Live in person meeting (hopefully) and Zoom. Guest Speaker Marchell "Micki" Phelps. President North Central Jurisdiction UMW and national Racial Justice committee member.

October 23: Michigan Conference Annual Celebration and Meeting Westwood UMC in Kalamazoo

May 20 – 22, 2022: United Methodist Women Assembly Orange County Convention Center, Orlando Florida. Be bold and start saving now for the experience of a lifetime!

It is my privilege to serve as a member for your Heritage District UMW Team and we have such a wonderful group of women who have learned all about the Virtual World this past year! My thanks to all of them!

Blessings and love to all of you!

"Let all that we do be done in love" 1 Corinthians 16:14

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The Heritage District (United Methodist Church) office mailing address has changed to:
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Communications Coordinator

Over Lent, my church looked at the theme of Wilderness. In youth group, we looked at the story of Hagar and Ishmael, and recalled how God was with them in the wilderness, when they had to leave Abraham's care.

Although this past year has often felt like a wilderness, a place we've never been before, we've also learned how to adapt. I don't know if it's the flowers blooming, or longer days, or what, but I have felt a new energy the last few weeks. Maybe I'm adapting.

In our devotional book from Sanctified Art, one of the statements was "the wilderness is a place of beginnings". Have you tried anything new in the "wilderness"? I've been cooking for my parents when I visit them, and tried new recipes that I've never prepared before. (I'm single and live alone, so it's mostly salads or eggs and toast for me!)

Fortunately, God is always with us...wherever we are. I hope you can identify new chapters of your life where God is nudging you to try something new. God quenched Hagar's thirst when she was in the desert. How does God do that for you now? What is your prayer for a new beginning?

In terms of communications for the district, we've tried some new things this year! It was so nice to see many of you at the Prayer Event, and wasn't Jeanette Harris awesome?!

A co-worker and I created a little mini-seminar for our church's welcome team we called "Using Facebook for Good". We have lots of tools at our disposal that can be used to drag people down, or lift them up. Would you be interested in us having a communications meeting sometime to learn more about that for your unit or yourself? Send me an email! wendy@fumc-a2.org



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P.S. Don't forget to join our Facebook group! Search for UMW Heritage District

Vice President/Program Coordinator



Greetings! In my January 2021 newsletter article, I talked about New Hope, New Beginnings, New Joy. Well, I would like to expand on that statement. Since that newsletter we planned a Spring Prayer/Spiritual Day in March, which I hope you had the opportunity to attend. I would like to thank my sub-committee team members (you all know who you are) who spent many hours planning for this event and praying together that we could actually have it. (New Hope.)

Ms. Jeanette Harris gave a very inspirational and passionate talk on her travels with the UMVIM trip (which stands for United Methodist Volunteer In Mission trip) to Costa Rica. She shared slides of new friends that she met and worked with side-by-side during her time there. (New Beginnings.) She also challenged each one of us to step up and give your time to the Lord. Find something you can do in your church to volunteer, your neighborhood or on a UMVIM trip. There is always a job that we can do - no matter how big or how small – when we step out in faith God is by our side to help us. Remember...We Are Bold United Methodist Women. (New Joy.)

You should be receiving an evaluation via email. Please take the time to fill this out on-line, so that we can plan for the next event. We, as a committee, want to make sure we are presenting interesting topics, music and entertainment for our district meetings.

I would ask that you pray for the Heritage District Leadership team this year. Some of the opportunities that will be coming up are Mission u events, dates through the summer.

Please also mark your calendars for the Heritage District Annual Celebration & Meeting that will be held at Saline UMC (if possible, to meet in person) on September 25, 2021 from 8:30 am - 3:00 pm.

- *New Hope* ... We have Hope because we know whatever the challenge is, as a United Methodist woman we will get the job done.
- *New Beginnings* ... We welcome new ladies to the Leadership Team to help expand concepts of mission to women, children, and youth.
- *New Joy* ... We have joy because we have the courage and the will to survive the year of 2021 and have fun doing it.

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Newsletter Distribution

Newsletter distribution is primarily done as an email with links to the PDF files on the District website. The newsletter is available to any district member who wishes to view it.

We are happy to print and mail the newsletter to any local units who do not use email, but it has become too expensive to mail a physical copy of the newsletter to every member.

If you have any questions, please contact Wendy Everett, District Communications Coordinator, at wendy@fumc-a2.org or 734-255-9146

Mission Coordinator for Spiritual Growth

THE NATIONAL LEVEL FOCUS



At the national level there are four priority issues that UMW units everywhere will be striving to affect change for the next four years
<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/issues> :

1. Criminalization of Communities of Color: *Interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline*
2. Climate Justice: *Reduce carbon footprint emissions of corporations and individuals*
3. Economic Inequality: *Adopt legislation in states/localities that builds the base for a living wage*
4. Maternal and Child Health: *Decrease maternal mortality; develop a network of women's health advocates for access to health care and education*

With the national issues comes a lot of supportive material that can be used at the local level. However, there are four local concerns that have come to my attention as I've interacted with district unit membership. Below I will present these issues, and ask for your response in an effort to create supportive materials for you regarding ***What are current groups doing?***

FOUR LOCAL CHALLENGES

#1 GROWTH & RECRUITMENT

We are getting older, and younger members are not joining us in sufficient numbers to sustain the organization long term. So, how can local units be successful in recruiting younger women?

And related to this . . . how can we support older members of smaller units who are individually doing more with less and getting burnt out just keeping up with historical commitments? Yet, if they pull back due to lack of resources or simple lack of physical energy, they become even less visible to their congregations and communities. What adaptations/accommodations can be made in the face of decreasing membership?

YOUR RESPONSE: Please send me your best recruitment idea and most successful accommodation for smaller groups with older members. Example: change a dine-in fund raising dinner to take-out only because take-out is an operation that can be run by fewer people.

#2 THE IMPACT OF COVID

How can we be effective at what we do during a pandemic – when we cannot do what we do best: nurture relationships?! How can we do life together when we can't ***be together?***

Also related is: . . . how do we deal with the limits of technology or bridge the technology gap?

Zoom is great for the technically savvy, but what about the technologically challenged or those with limited access for whatever reason? Also, some have mentioned that Zoom isn't really satisfying -- technology hasn't really replaced being together. What if unit membership is "Zoomed out"?

YOUR RESPONSE: Please send me one amazing way your unit maintains connections in addition to checking in with phone calls, sending notes and cards and emails, doing Facebook posts, or door drops . . . tell us your amazing idea we don't yet know about! (Even if you think we do know about it!)

#3 NEED FOR RESOURCES (This one is 4-fold.)

a) Personal/Spiritual Growth materials. Local units also requested resources for monthly devotions. (Inspirational stories or spiritual growth materials like a video series with study guides and discussion questions needing only a facilitator (instead of a teacher) were popular.)

YOUR RESPONSE: Send me a link to (or a description of) your most helpful and inspiring encounter with devotional or study materials. Share what has profoundly impacted your unit.

Spiritual Growth (con't)

b) Speakers/Presenter. A list of special speakers or presenters has been requested – a list of those willing to speak at a local unit meeting or at a special UMW local event like a Saturday morning breakfast gathering. Many units feel they need an infusion of "new blood" or at least some "cross pollination" to help refresh and revitalize.

YOUR RESPONSE: Are you willing to share your area of expertise or special experience? Or if you know of an outstanding person, please pass on their names and contact information to me.

c) Best Practices. The creation of some kind of a curated online sharing space where individuals and units could share best practices - "what worked for them" organized by subject. (*Something to do with Google and post-it notes is in the works - stay tuned!*)

YOUR RESPONSE: If you have discovered an exceptional way of doing something, or an impressive event, or unusual way to meet a need, or a "remarkable anything" that worked for you . . . PLEASE SHARE!

d) Fundraising Ideas. ALL UNITS asked for creative fundraising ideas – they are open to anything that could safely raise money during a pandemic.

YOUR RESPONSE: If you have developed a unique way to raise resources, please let me know what you did and how you did it! I will pass it on.

#4. REVISITING, REINVENTING, OR REIMAGINING US

Finally, even though younger women love the mission focus of the UMW, they feel our meeting structure doesn't work for them. Younger women mentioned how packed their plates already are and how they struggle with work-life balance – how multiple responsibilities leave little "me time". With so little discretionary time, outside activities are carefully weighed for meaning and matching of life goals. So, in what form do we offer spiritual refreshing and invigorating service opportunities?

Some units have shifted from a monthly meeting to a weekend breakfast gathering with a speaker, or a gathering around a service learning project, or a gathering that takes on a different form each time. Some do "housekeeping" communications electronically rather than in person. Some units resemble a class or small group. Others do a bigger quarterly event instead of meeting monthly. I quote one comment: "I believe we can and must continue to advocate for women, youth, and children – as long as we exist, but how do we make sure we continue to exist?"

YOUR RESPONSE: Think about your unit's "modus operandi" . . . are we willing to revisit, reinvent, or reimagine when and how UMW units gather? Will your unit brainstorm and send me a couple of ideas to share next time?

I know as you read these, ideas came to your mind, so, before life distracts you, pull out your phone or sit down at your computer and tell me about them. Do not trust your memory or deceive yourself into believing you'll do this later. As the old Nike ad says JUST DO IT! Help our local units with the answers within you! Let's build up the body of women called UMW whose mission is so vital.

"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom." Prov. 11:14

SHARE: Email me at lora.crombez@gmail.com or call or text me at (734) 368-7391.

Next time I will share the ideas given to me.

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Secretary

Happy Spring everyone!! I am the new Secretary for the Heritage District ...talk about a steep learning curve! In this age of Covid, we have had to communicate through Zoom meetings and emails but everyone on the leadership team has been patient and welcoming. I started out wanting all my minutes to be perfect but I learned that some meetings don't have a neat beginning, middle, and end.

I am learning to embrace uncertainty, subdue any sense of panic, and trust in my team and the good Lord! God has helped me to be productive with my time and to realize each of these wonderful women are teachers, mentors, and some of the kindest Christians I have ever met.... He has placed me just where He wants me. Blessings to you all in these times of insecurity. May God's will help you embrace life with a peaceful heart.

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Mission Coordinator for Education and Interpretation

In the weeks before Easter, a song kept running through my head, an occurrence known as having an "ear worm". It happens to lots of people, but it happens to this old music teacher a lot. "Run, Come, See" were the words that would not go away. It took a long time to locate the song book with the complete text. After I found the song in the green book I had pictured, I remembered that I had taught the song to the church children's choir decades ago. The children and I acted out the Easter story of the rolled-away stone, a sitting angel, telling others of the empty tomb, shouting for joy. Each Gospel version of the resurrection is different. Jesus greets a weeping Mary in one, but he is not seen at the tomb in another. The disciples run away in fear in a different telling. In Luke's gospel, the men don't believe what the women say they saw. Peter checked out the tomb on his own, seeing only the linen cloth, returned home "wondering what had happened". (CEB)

Who are we in these versions of the Easter narratives? I readily admit that I do not RUN to do much of anything anymore, but I do get excited when I realize that there are different ways to run a meeting so that we can be together in person and Zoom as the same time. One of our Circle's eldest members, who had said she thought it was getting too hard to get to our UMW meetings any more, came to our meeting in person this week where she was joined by ten others. In an interesting "switcheroo", five others participated virtually. Isn't it great to have a safe choice? Let's hope we don't make people RUN the other way or return home as Peter did.

COME! Do you ever go without an invitation? Would you invite someone new to COME? How do you make people feel welcome? Do you have something exciting to share with them? What can you find in common? Is there some need you can meet together?

SEE! We can see the sparkle in each other's' eyes above our masks. We can see in our communities, around our country, and in the world both the pain and the joy. We can see where we must work together, learn together, pray together, and share our resources. RUN, COME, SEE, and SHOUT FOR JOY!

I am anticipating receiving Mission Today reports from your unit. I will be reaching out to assist you so your units can be honored.

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The District Newsletter, Forms, and contact information for the Leadership Team can be found on the Conference UMW Website

www.umwmichiganconference.org/hrd.html



Heritage District United Methodist Women Leadership Team

***Seeking women who are interested in serving as a leader for the
Heritage District UMW***

To serve on the district team you need to

- Be a member of a UMW unit
- Have a heart willing to work alongside other women who have the same purpose and love for UMW

Benefits-

- Learn Leadership Skills
- Work with a wonderful group of Spirit filled women
- Attend exciting meetings & events
- Do something women have been doing for more than 150 years

Support provided

Zoom meetings with some in-person

Positions available – Social Action – Spiritual Growth – Nominations

If God is placing this on your heart, you will know! Please contact Sherry Wagenknecht at 734-269-2578 if you are interested or just want to know more about it!

Mission Coordinator for Social Action

Hello ladies! Spring is here, the sun is shining, and God has made a wonderful world for us to live in! We are still masking, social distancing, washing our hands, etc. Hopefully with the rollout of vaccines, we are on our way to a safer Michigan.

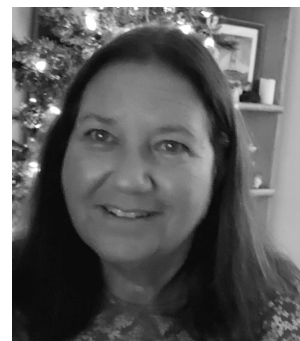
Listening to the news can be a very depressing activity at times. As I write this, the closing arguments are on for the Chauvin trial, for an incident that happened a year ago, and there have been many more incidents since for us to be concerned about.

I took a class with the national UMW about 10 years ago that really stayed with me. As a class, we chose a subject in the news that concerned us. Then we picked 3 news outlets from anywhere in the world and looked at them daily to see how they reported on our topic, if at all. Thru this exercise, I became familiar with NEWSY, that I watch to this day. I still look at a variety, but that one stuck. Their slogan is "To Inform, Not Influence". None of them are totally unbiased, but I like to hear about the news without so much commentary.

There are so many issues to pray about and do our part if we can. I would love to hear what you are doing or praying about from your standpoint. I had the opportunity to talk to Local Unit presidents recently to hear what has been happening. Their experiences were across the board, from no meetings to Zoom meetings, to at church meetings. Some were very active during this time. Thank you for those conversations.

Please check out the UMW Conference and National websites for further projects and information. The *Response* magazine helps us to continue to know national and international happenings.

God's blessings to you!



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Mission Coordinator for Program Resources



Happy Spring! As we enjoy the blessing of warmer weather, the fresh scent of cut grass, the array of spring flowers, and the return of the migrating birds, may we remember also that each one of us is a blessing from God as well.

Great News in regard to our UMW Reading Program! Another list of books will be shared by the end of April 2021. This is in addition to the books that were featured in the 2021-2022 catalog. This 2022 Reading program list will include new books from the following areas: Education for Mission, Leadership Development, Nurturing for Community, Spiritual Growth, Social Action, Children's Books, and Youth Books. Keep an eye on the UMW Reading Program website: <umw.org/readingprogram> for the 2022 Reading Program List.

The book I would like to Spotlight in this article is entitled *GumMoon: A Novel of San Francisco Chinatown*. This book, written by Jeffrey L. Staley and based on a true story, is found in the category of Education for Mission. In 1898, three-year-old Chinese-American Mei Chun Lai is sold to a brothel keeper, where a sympathetic prostitute befriends her. Two years later, at the height of a plague quarantine, a young Methodist woman rescues Chun and places her in a home for abused and trafficked girls. The home is destroyed in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. Chun (aka Maud) and a group of seven other Chinese children embark on a cross-country tour to raise funds to rebuild. When the matron of the home suffers a break-down, 13-year-old Maud must lead the band of children home.

A personal reflection on this book "This was a very inspiring story to read and contemplate the strength and perseverance of Maud and many others in her life."

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Treasurer

As I was thinking about this article and what to share, I decided to go to the UMW Website to see if I could find some good ideas. As treasurer for the Heritage District, I have been asked a few times, "Where does the money go?" Good Question! I found this on the UMW website that answers this question in a complete and concise statement.



"United Methodist Women is trusted with pledges and donations from individual members and local member organizations, as well as mission partners and anonymous donors who have a heart for mission. We support programs in the United States and around the world that benefit women, children and youth - thereby impacting entire communities. As an agency of The United Methodist Church, United Methodist Women abides by the social principles and discipline as determined by General Conference, giving only to projects in accordance with those guidelines. "

As I read this statement, I thought about my morning devotional Psalm 150 that spoke to the need to continually, loudly, and excitedly, praise God.

Ps. 150 (v. 3-6) "Praise Him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!"

These two statements have a lot in common. You might ask, "How are these statements alike?" It takes the whole orchestra, each individual instrument participating, to create music that brings great joy and stirs the soul. It takes all of us together helping and giving to positively impact the world and change entire communities in a major way.

When we praise God, we should go all out, and I think our act of giving is praising God, trusting him to do good things. The giving of one person is great, but the giving of many enables ALL to celebrate God's powerful acts of greatness that can change the lives of many. As it takes many instruments for the whole orchestra to play in unison to create exceptionally beautiful music that changes people's feelings, it takes many members giving to impact communities all around the world. God's orchestration of people working together to build harmonious, impacting acts that benefit those who are in great need, to bring about great joy, and to stir the soul.

When we all take up our instruments and use them to praise God, He can orchestrate beautiful harmony for all.

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Nominations

I'm confident everyone is saying pandemic "enough is enough". I have lived alone in a bubble for the last 14 months due to a health problem. Please get your shots so I can get out of lockup! It would be great to go out to lunch, play golf with league, go to a movie, attend church, and meet with friends and family.

Hudson First has been my church the last 55 years. The UMW has been a huge joy, serving in every office more than once plus other committees in the church. The Heritage Leadership Team contacted me to join their team in 2019. The pandemic hit. The Lord has blessed me by giving me a new focus and a wonderful group of ladies now in my life. We have our Zoom meetings to arrange virtual meetings for the district. It has been uplifting to converse with the team and share our daily trials.

Now I am inviting you to join the leadership team. Take time during this pandemic to pray about serving on our team. We are contacting members to complete the slate for 2022. Five or six members of our Leadership Team have been calling the District Unit Presidents to recruit members to fill the Social Action Chair and five to seven Nomination Committee Members. My faith keeps me busy with new projects each day. I challenge you to step out of your comfort zone and join our team. God bless each and every one of you.

Shirley M. Carpenter
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Heritage District 2021 Calendar

(all meetings via Zoom unless indicated otherwise)

June 1-6	Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church
June 26	Leadership Team Meeting Tecumseh UMC (hybrid meeting – outside and Zoom (we hope!))
July 9-10	Mission u <i>Zoom Study</i> Pushout: the Criminalization of Black girls in School
August 13-14	Mission u <i>Zoom Study</i> Bearing Witness in the Kin-dom: Living Into the Church's Moral Witness Through Radical Discipleship
Ideally, the following calendar items will be in-person or hybrid events, but that is subject to restrictions from MI Department of Health and Human Services and recommendations from the Michigan Conference. Watch for further information as the year continues.	
September 11	Leadership Team Meeting Saline UMC
September 25	8:00 - 3:30 Annual Celebration/meeting Saline UMC
October 18-19	Mission u of the North Gaylord UMC
October 22	(evening) Michigan Conference Leadership training (location to be determined)
October 23	Michigan Conference Annual Celebration Meeting (location to be determined)
November 13	9:00 - 1: 30 Local Unit Leadership Training Dundee UMC

Unit Officer Report Deadlines

October 1	Officer List	Wendy Everett, Communications Coordinator
November 30	2021 Monies/Pledges	Treasurer
December 31	Mission Today Reports	Donna Williams, Education and Interpretation
	Reading Program Participants	Diane Tandy, Program Resources
	5-Channel Units/5-Star Person Names	Treasurer

In the works:
a sharing platform!
a new prayer tool!
a great Fall Retreat that addresses racial justice!
. . . STAY TUNED!