

The V.O.I.C.E.

Valuable Organizational Information Connecting Everyone

The Official Newsletter of the Michigan Conference United Women in Faith

There is a Place for You - Here

As you already know, United Methodist Women changed our name to United Women in Faith (UWF) almost one year ago. Many have mixed feelings about that – but it is not the first time we have changed our name over our 150+ year history, and I would not hesitate to guess it won't be the last. As part of the research behind the decision to change our name, they found that women polled – both inside and outside the UMC – are looking for a sisterhood of faith to belong to. They want a small group, within the larger context of the church, to grow their faith and take missional action together with other women.

Have we got the place for you! The Book of Discipline of the UMC states that in every local church there shall be an organized unit of United Methodist Women (now United Women in Faith). However, some churches are closing their units for many different reasons, even though this is exactly what women say they want for their spiritual lives.

So, if your church has a local unit of United Women in Faith, be intentionally invitational to draw the circle wider. Yes, invite personally each and every woman you know to join you. Ask for the pastor's support and encouragement to grow and keep this important ministry going. Don't be tempted to assume your UWF unit is the same as the Ministry Committee in your local church, it is so much more than that – it is spiritual growth, hands-on mission, support of global mission for women,

children and youth specifically, and it is a **sisterhood of faith!**

If the local unit meeting time is not convenient – plan special events that women can join together in, especially hands-on mission opportunities: gather for breakfast, assemble layette kits for Midwest Mission, serve together in the local food pantry, hold a bake sale to financially support the global ministries of UWF, plan a road trip to United Methodist Community House in Grand Rapids, etc. Need more ideas? Give me a call!

And, if your church does not have a local unit of United Women in Faith, all of your Conference and District UWF Leadership Teams are here to lend a hand, along with your local pastor, to help you join our sisterhood. Gather a couple women to attend a District or Conference UWF Event together, make plans to attend Mission u where women, men, children and youth are all included in this family "retreat" to grow and learn together, start a book club reading from the UWF Reading Program, etc.

There is a place for you here, in our **sisterhood of faith**, taking **action** together to tackle the hard work of the world without hesitation!

Blessings and peace,

Julia Paradine-Rice, President

Michigan Conference UWF
jparadinerice@gmail.com
989-576-0675

Volume 5, Issue 1
February 2023

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If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, you can subscribe on our website at: <https://www.umwconference.org/>

United Methodist Community House Update



United Methodist
Community House

Dear Michigan
Conference
friends,
Since
United Women

in Faith founded UMCH more than 120 years ago, we have worked to create a place where no child will ever miss their chance for the best start in life. Where no parent will have to choose between keeping their children safe or keeping a job. And where no older adult will ever be lonely and isolated, longing for connection and help.

You have been our partners in this work every step of the way. In 2022 alone, United Women in Faith donated over \$40,000 to support our mission at UMCH. Thank you!

This year, we'll take an even bigger step forward together. Filled with faith in our community and in each other, we have a plan to help even more people find a place to belong.

The "Creating a Place to Belong" campaign is a visionary plan to transform and improve the lives of children, families, and seniors throughout Kent County.

We know many of you have followed along as our expansion plans have taken shape. We are excited to share that in the last year, UMCH secured more than \$20 million in public funding to support our campaign, with more than \$10 million in government funding requests in process.

To get us the rest of the way to our goal, we are moving forward with the philanthropic portion of our campaign in 2023. Our goal is to raise \$7 million from foundations, corporations, faith groups, and individual donors. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation generously contributed a \$1 million lead gift, so we have \$6 million to go.

In the coming months, we are excited to share updates about the campaign and opportunities for United Women in Faith members to be involved.

We won't announce the campaign to the public until we are closer to our \$7 million goal. Still, it's important to us to have all of you in the Michigan Conference with us on this journey as our treasured partners. Together, we have an exciting year ahead!

With gratitude,



Eric J. Williams
UMCH Co CEO



Carla Moore
UMCH Co CEO

Prayer for United Methodist Community House



Creator God,

We know that you touch people's hearts through the Holy Spirit. We have seen an example of this throughout the last century as United Methodist Community House reached out and changed the lives of the least among us, children, youth, and seniors

Today we are looking toward the future with a vision of what your world should look like. You have called us once again to be the hands and feet of Jesus as we step out in faith and love to continue to make a difference in the lives of this neighborhood.

We thank you God for leading us in the past and look forward to where you are leading us today and into the future.

We put ourselves in your hands, God, as we strive to do your will and turn our faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of the children, youth, and seniors in this neighborhood and beyond.
Amen.

Mission u 2023

Living the Good News, Reflecting God's Love

I am the dean for Mission u this year and I am excited to let you know that planning is well underway! Here are some of the important things to know:

- The centrally located **Mt Pleasant First UMC** in Mt Pleasant will host us.
- Dates are **Thursday, July 13 to Saturday, July 15** with beginning activities starting at 4pm. If work or school keeps you from getting there by 4 just come when you can!
- The adult study is based on The Lord's Prayer and called **Living the Kin-dom: Exploring the Lord's Prayer as a Spiritual Practice for Social Transformation**. The youth and children's studies are also based on Living in the Kin-dom.
- **YOUTH AND CHILDREN ARE FREE!** The former West Michigan Conference was able to offer the studies free to kids and grandkids of those attending and it was wonderful to watch those kids become a close-knit group. Most of them are adults or seniors in high school now and we hope they will still attend. Spread the word!
- **Our study leaders are exceptional!**
 - ◊ The Rev. Audra Hudson will be teaching the adult study. She serves the Wesley Foundation at Central Michigan University as their Director.
 - ◊ The Rev. Tiffany Newsom is back this year, teaching the youth. She serves at Laingsburg UMC.
 - ◊ The Rev. Paul Reissmann is also leading the youth. He serves the Central United Methodist Church of Lake Odessa.
 - ◊ The Rev. Ronda Libbett will be teaching the children. She serves at St. Luke AME Zion Church in Grand Rapids.
- Mission u will be **hybrid**-which means you can choose to come in person or attend online. We've learned so much new lingo

since COVID!

- **Scholarships** are available from the UWF Conference and Districts. Contact Judy Huynh and she can help you. judyhuynh@gmail.com
- The **Ingathering** will go to CCN (Community Compassion Network) in Mt. Pleasant. Let's replenish their baby pantry with the following: formula, any kind except toddler, baby food, baby care items like wash, lotion, shampoo, sippy cups, bottle brushes and bottles, diapers size 4 &5, personal hygiene items.
- **Lodging** is on your own but we have reserved a block of rooms at a great price of only \$119 plus taxes for up to 4 people. Register early and book your hotel early to get the best price.
 - If you get to Mt. Pleasant early on Thursday the **Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture & Lifeways** is a great museum and would be a nice field trip.
 - **Books, books, books!** There are so many ways to get your study books. See the registration form for how. Ruth Sutton, our Secretary for Program Resources, will also have Reading Program books for sale. If that doesn't satisfy your book hunger we will also have a book sharing table. Bring books you want to get rid of and for a small donation take the ones you want to read. Money raised will go to our Pledge to Mission.

See the registration form in this issue for all the info you need and sign up early to be part of Mission u! I'm happy to be your dean. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions about any of the above.

Connie Swinger

Mission u Dean

connieswinger@att.net

(616) 813-4670



**MICHIGAN CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH
SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION
MISSION u July 13-15, 2023**

Name _____ Phone _____

Street Address _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Age: 18-25 26-40 41-60 61+

Are you a member of United Women in Faith? _____

If yes, where? _____

Will you attend Mission u full time? Yes No

Will children/youth be attending with you? Yes No

If yes, please indicate names & ages below

What do you hope to learn from attending Mission u?

Scholarship Request:

Lodging _____ Registration _____

Please note that you will need to purchase your own study guide, as it will not be available at the Mission u event.

Please submit this form to: Judy Huynh at judyhuynh@gmail.com
or mail it to: 2101 Clarksville Road
Portland, MI 48875

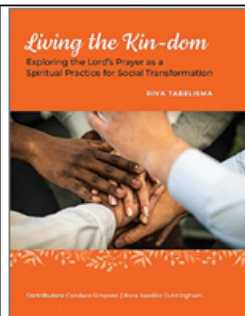
Call or email with any questions: (269) 838-1804 or judyhuynh@gmail.com



**Mount Pleasant First
United Methodist Church**
400 South Main Street
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858

July 13-15 (Thursday-Saturday)
4:00 pm Registration (EST)

In-Gathering will benefit Community Care Network in Mt Pleasant. You may bring infant (not toddler) formula, baby food, baby care items, diapers sizes 4 & 5, personal hygiene items.



ADULT STUDY

Living the Kin-dom by Riva Tabelisma

**\$75 until July 1
\$85 After July 1
\$40 ZOOM**

This study gives fresh eyes to the Lord's Prayer. Often learned by rote, the Lord's Prayer is a rich guide for how we can live out God's kin-dom in our lives. Tabelisma invites participants in this study to step away from our automatic recitation of the prayer and dive deep into the meaning of each line over the course of eight one-hour sessions. Each of the sessions examines a section of the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6:9-13 as it is recorded in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.



YOUTH STUDY

Seek and You Shall Find: Living in the Kin-dom, by Rachel Mosher

**FREE for
all youth**

The 2023 youth curriculum leads youth through eight one-hour

sessions that teach participants to find the kin-dom in the world around them, how to live what they have learned, and how to share the Good News about the kin-dom with others.

CHILDREN'S STUDY

We Are the Kin-dom! By Kathleen Stone

This curriculum guides children through an exploration of earthly kingdoms in contrast to God's kin-dom and our role in living out the latter here and now. Children will be introduced to the concept of kin-dom vs kingdom to help distinguish between the flawed human construction of a kingdom that often results in op-pression and exclusion, and God's perfect kin-dom that offers freedom and inclusion.

The study is supplemented by a four-part video, *We Are the Kin-dom: Global Kids' Voices*. This video includes interviews with children from around the world who were asked about their understanding of what kingdom means.



These books are available at: <https://uwfaith.org/events/mission-u/>

If you prefer, you can order them to be picked up at Mission u . Please indicate this in the Mission u merchandise section of the order form. AVAILABLE ONLY FOR IN PERSON.

You can register for Mission u online at:
<https://michiganconferencemissionu.square.site/> or scan the QR Code



This form MUST be filled out for Mission u NO OTHER FORMS WILL BE ACCEPTED

Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Home Church: _____

District: _____

Youth/Children (name and age): _____

- | | |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Study Book Living the Kin-dom | \$17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Study Book: Seek and You will Find | \$17 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Study Book: You are the Kin-dom | \$17 |
| ALL BOOKS MUST BE PAID IN ADVANCE AND CAN BE ORDERED HERE FOR IN PERSON ONLY | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual | \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Registration (by June 15) | \$75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Late Registration (after June 15) | \$85 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth (6th grade or older) | FREE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child (1st grade - 5th grade) | FREE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare (Kindergarten or younger) | FREE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donation Community Caring Network
(the recipient of our In-Gathering) | _____ |

TOTAL DUE: _____

Late registration due July 1

Check all that apply:

Information:

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> First time attending | <input type="checkbox"/> Study Leader | <input type="checkbox"/> Laity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conference Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> Paid online | <input type="checkbox"/> Missionary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> District Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Assistance Applicant | |

Special needs:

- ☐ Sign language interpreters
☐ Dietary requirements (specify) _____

This form can be found on the Michigan UMW Website, registration can be paid by check payable to: Mission u or online at: <https://michiganconferencemissionu.square.site/> This link is also found on the website.

Send registrations to: Sally Messner, 124 Boyd Street, Fife Lake, MI 49633, mimissionu@gmail.com



Lodging is on your own. **We have a block of rooms until July 1st** at the Hampton Inn, 5205 E. Pickard, Mount Pleasant, (989) 772-5500. Mention Mission u or UWF for the special rate of \$119 per room per night: includes breakfast. This price is good for 1-4 people in a room. There is a pool!

SAVE THE DATE!

5th Conference Annual Celebration
October 28, 2023

Holt United Methodist Church
2321 N Aurelius Road, Holt, MI

Registration starts @ 8:30 am

Keynote speaker: Bishop Bard

Celebrate our accomplishments!



Annual Advocacy Day



ANNUAL ADVOCACY DAY

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

8:30 am - 3 pm
at Central UMC - Lansing



REGISTER ONLINE: michiganumc.org/justice-and-advocacy/

Join Michigan United Methodists for the first annual Advocacy Day at Central UMC in Lansing! This will be a day of prayer, public witness, and meetings with your elected officials about gun safety! Registration costs \$20 to help cover related expenses, and scholarships are available. Contact Alice Townley, atownley@michiganumc.org, or Michelle King, mmking108@gmail.com.

ACTS OF PUBLIC WITNESS

Corey Simon, Disruptive Disciple Blacksmithing

PRESS CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

David Bard, Bishop of the Michigan Conference

The Honorable Julie Rogers, State of Michigan House of Representatives, District 41

Heather McDougall-Walsh and more



Advocacy Day Schedule

Wednesday, March 22, 8:00am-3:00pm

Central United Methodist Church
215 N Capitol Ave, Lansing, MI 48933

- 8:00am Registration and refreshments
- 8:30am Welcome
- 8:45-11am Meetings with groups and elected officials
- 11:15am Press Conference
- 12:15pm Lunch
- 1:00pm Worship
- 2:00pm Tour of the Capitol available
- 3:00pm Depart for Home

Pre-Event Training

(all on Zoom, live and recorded)

1. Spiritual Grounding and Relational Building: **Tuesday, March 7 at 4:00pm**
2. How to Speak and be Heard by Elected Officials*: **Monday, March 13 at 7:00pm**
3. Preparing for Your Advocacy Day Meeting*: **Tuesday, March 21 at 4:00pm**

Post-Event Debrief

- Key Learnings and Takeaways: **Tuesday, March 28 at 4:00pm**

*required



ANNUAL ADVOCACY DAY

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22

8:30 am - 3 pm
at Central UMC - Lansing



prayer, public witness, and meetings with elected officials

REGISTER ONLINE
michiganumc.org/justice-and-advocacy/



Messages from District Presidents

As we write this Central Bay District UWF is preparing for our Spiritual Enrichment Brunch on February 11, 2023. The Speaker is Jody Pratt Theme: How can Spiritual Gifts equip us for service.

We will have the Spiritual Life Retreat at the Springs on April 28 & 29. The Speaker is Faith Fowler. Mission u at Mt Pleasant UMC July 13-15, Central Bay District Annual Celebration and ELT at Mt. Pleasant UMC on October 7. Our next Leadership Team Meeting will be on April 1 at Bay City Grace West UMC

The Nomination Team and all of the Leadership Team Members are working very hard to fill the openings on the Team. We still have openings for Vice President, Social Action, Membership Nurture and Outreach and several places on the Nomination committee. Please Prayerfully consider

joining The Central Bay District UWF Leadership Team. **WE NEED YOU NOW.**

With the New District Changes it's going to be a challenge, but we will work through it. We want to welcome those new to our District and will welcome any of you to the Leadership Team.

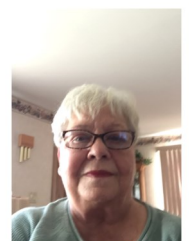
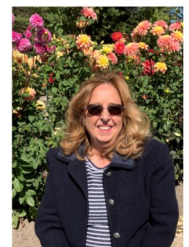
Blessings,

Caroline Diaz

Co-President
Central Bay District
diazc5282@gmail.com
(989) 450-1735

Doris Simons

Co-President
Central Bay District
dorissimons@att.net
(989) 781-1492



Messages from District Presidents

So – tame & predictable OR wild & unpredictable? Comfortable, safe, content OR adventurous, alert, surprising? I just read a Lent devotion using Luke 4:1-14 as the Scripture, the story of Jesus in the wilderness for 40 days. He encounters the devil – and God – in a wild place. And he has the answers, because he knew the Scriptures! Just when we think one thing about Jesus, we find another characteristic to be true. Jesus wasn't tame & predictable. Neither is our life. The more we try to be tame and predictable and make up rules to follow – well, Jesus kind of blows that all away!

I couldn't help but think about United Women in Faith. We received a new name last year. There was some grumbling and trepidation, but also some rejoicing and shedding of the old ways for the new. Now the redistricting of Michigan Conference, which of course affects UWF. It is wild & unpredictable! A new chance to redefine our work with women, children and youth! I keep hearing: FAITH, ACTION, SISTERHOOD. Let's remember that! It is the most important thing for us in the midst of change.

One quote from the devotion I read was: "It is when life is unpredictable that we most quickly discover who God is and who we are in him." (Dan Wilt, Jesus in the Wild, Seedbed, 2/22/2023) So maybe this is just a test! Well, life is unpredictable whether we want it to be or not, so let's embrace the new changes and discover what God has in store for us! We must reject our

old, tame, formal, rule-following self & step out to seek new adventure and new expressions of our love for God! Our true self minus the status quo. Listening to God with our whole heart! Embracing the new with the foundation of the old. I'm ready – are you? FAITH, ACTION, SISTERHOOD!

Important dates to remember for NWD:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| April 15 | Retreat, "Because We're Family" at Frankfort UMC
Rev. Debbie Highway |
| May 20 | Power of Bold Day, "A Home for All" at Traverse City Central UMC
Alline Beutler from JFON
Ashley Halladay-Schmandt,
Director of Northwest Michigan
Coalition to End Homelessness |
| Oct. 7 | Fifth Annual NWD Celebration,
Mancelona UMC |

Each event will be offered as a hybrid, so come one, come all – yes, we are trying a new thing! More details in our newsletter, 'Catch a Wave,' on our Facebook page, and on the Michigan Conference website.

Julia Hulka

President
Northern Waters District
jahulka49@gmail.com
(989) 348-1992
c (989) 860-8189

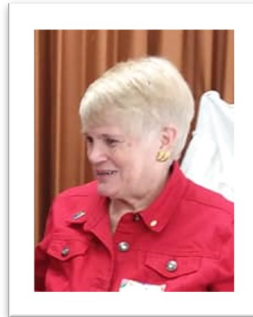


Messages from District Presidents

2022 is now over and we are learning to adjust to changes in our lives: new leaders, new churches, new titles, new district lines, and new opportunities but something never changes and that is God's love for us and his call for us to reach out and love others. We will be welcoming new units into our district at our District Annual Celebration on Oct. 1st. In the mean time I am encouraging each unit, not only in our district but in the conference, to invite women of all ages and faiths, into our sisterhood of believers. Welcome them to our all our events: Spring Fling on March 25th, Mission Evening on June 22nd, Mission u Retreat July 13-15th, District Annual Celebration on Sept. 30th and Conference Annual Celebration on Oct. 28th. Imagine growing your unit from 8 to 16. Make new friends but keep the old, one is silver and the other's gold. God Bless you all! God is good all the time, God is good!

Linda Burton-Collier

President
Greater Southwest District
(269) 793-7340
lindaburtoncollier@gmail.com



Midwest District invites you to their Spring Fling on Saturday, March 18. Sparta UMC is our host church. Program starts at 10 am. Topic is "Migratory Farm Movement Fact or Fiction". Afternoon breakout sessions too. Cost is \$15.00.

Jean Sherman

Midwest District President
sherdairy1@gmail.com
(231) 519-2542



Greetings United Woman in Faith.

God is in the Blessing business and he has allowed us to see another year. We cannot ignore God's blessings. This year promises to be very Spirit filled and rewarding. We have lots of programs planned to enhance and glorify God's works. Our dedication to our vision allows us to follow the perfect plan that God has designed for us. We shall answer the call. Our hope and faith gives us the strength to face any challenges that we may encounter. God will see us through, we just need to continue to lean on him. That is what we do.

We would like to highlight two of our upcoming events. They are the "Prayer & Spiritual Growth Breakfast" at Burton First UMC on April 29, 2023 and the "East Winds District Annual Meeting" at Port Huron 1st UMC on October 14, 2023. Mark your calendars. Sisters in Christ,

Linda Moore

Dawn Titus

Co President East Winds District
(810) 986-0573 (810) 414-5018
linhen60@gmail.com Dtitus5018@gmail.com

March 23 - Day of Giving

Ways to give:

Check: United Women in Faith
Attn: Legacy
475 Riverside Drive, Ste 1500
New York, NY 10115

Write "DAY OF GIVING" in the memo section.

Text: "ACTION" to 20503

Phone: 800-278-7771,
8 am-5 pm EST, Weekdays

Online: <https://uwfaith.org/give/legacy-fund/?form=Dayofgiving>

*Together, we are
building our legacy!*



Check Our Our NEW Facebook!

Scan this code to go do our NEW Facebook page. Follow us to keep updated on events and view photos!



Conference Meeting Dates

Mission u - Mt. Pleasant UMC
July 13-15, 2023

Leadership Development - Holt UMC
October 27, 2023

Conference Annual - Holt UMC
October 28, 2023

Jurisdiction- Indianapolis
May 30-June 2 2024

Assembly- Indianapolis
2026

The V.O.I.C.E.

Valuable Organizational Information Connecting Everyone

The Official Newsletter of the Michigan Conference United Women in Faith

Published three times a year: February, May and August

Send submissions by the 10th of the previous month to
Sally Messner at sallymessner@yahoo.com

Charter for Racial Justice Grant

To encourage local UMW units to engage in projects to expand understanding of racial justice issues, the Michigan Conference UMW Charter for Racial Justice Committee is offering grants in amounts up to \$300 to local units.

Some ideas you may want to consider:

- Racial justice book study
- Guest speaker
- Travel to a museum or other site of racial justice significance

More ideas and resources for your unit are available at the following UMW website: [UMW Racial Justice Opportunities for Local Units](#)

Applications will be accepted until all available funds have been granted. If your grant is



accepted, we will ask your unit to send a short report to the Charter for Racial Justice Committee once you have completed your project/program.

Your submitted application letter should include the following information:

- Name of Unit, contact person name/ address/e-mail/phone number,
- Grant amount you are requesting and detailed use of funds
- Goals you hope to achieve and estimated # of people participating
- Beginning and ending date of project
- Any additional information to help us understand your plans.

Please send your application letter to jparadinerice@gmail.com or via snail mail to:
Julia Paradine-Rice, 11942 Prairie Edge Street, Schoolcraft, MI 49087