

### **OUTGOING PRESIDENT LINDA DARROW**

So long..... farewell.....auf Wiedersehen,  
goodbye, Adieu, adieu, to yieu and yieu and yieu”.

When I started to think about what I wanted to write for this newsletter article, my last one as Michigan Conference President of UMW, the lyrics from this song are the first thing that came to my mind! I don't know why.

I have such mixed emotions as my term comes to an end after the most amazing, four year rollercoaster ride I have ever been on! And, I am NOT a rollercoaster person! During Leadership Development Days one of these past years, the worship emphasis was on the scripture in Esther. My local weekly bible study is just finishing up a study on the same scripture. “For such a time as this.....” We are all familiar with this phrase. This phrase has been a huge part of what has gotten me through these past four years as Conference President. We know God has a plan. We don't know what that plan is, but we need to be receptive to following God's path.

In our current Mission u study, “Finding Peace in an Anxious World,” we learned that Proverbs frequently mentions following God's path. In Chapter 2 of the study book, the author identifies several steps on that path. The first step is moving from a place of anxiety to acceptance. Part of arriving at acceptance means to accept the call of God to work for justice and righteousness. Then, we must also continue on the path from acceptance to courage. God calls us and expects us to travel his path. God's path, these recent years, has taken some strange twists and turns. There have been some rough places, some brambles and bumpy places. There have been surprises. And, there have been so many wonderful rest stops and places of peace and so many friends all along the way.

Thank you ALL for your encouragement, love, support, and kind words!!! This has meant SO much to me, was so helpful, so many times. I am also SO excited about turning the reigns over to Julia Paradine Rice - an amazing, loving, passionate Christian sister. Please continue to support her like you have me.

“For such a time as this..... Adieu, adieu, to yieu and yieu and yieu”

**Linda Darrow, Michigan Conference  
President**  
[darrowlinda@gmail.com](mailto:darrowlinda@gmail.com)  
(989)763-8750

### **INCOMING PRESIDENT JULIA PARADINE-RICE**

I am excited and humbled to have the opportunity to serve as your President in the coming year! My name may be familiar, as I served as Treasurer of the Michigan Conference UMW in 2019. I live in Schoolcraft (Schoolcraft UMC) in the Greater Southwest District. This is my hometown; my husband and I moved (back) here in September 2019 to be closer to our parents. Prior to this move we lived in Alma (Alma UMC) in the Mid-Michigan District (formerly Heartland). I look forward to meeting more of you in person, when it is safe to do so, and working with the outstanding Michigan Conference UMW leadership team in the coming year.

We, as your elected leadership team – both District and Conference - are here for you. We are charged with the responsibility of understanding, upholding and working with all of you to fulfill the UMW Purpose. Yes, even during a global pandemic! To do this we really want to hear from you (what are your needs, wants, questions, etc.) so get in touch with us. Want a program to learn more about the School to Prison Pipeline? Looking for a good book your unit could read together and discuss? Need more information on where the Pledge to Mission money goes? How about help with the on-line UMW Census report? In this newsletter, each team member has included an e-mail address and a phone number to make it easy to reach us. If we don't know the answer, we will work to get one for you.

As 2021 is just around the corner, we continue to be faced with the ongoing challenges of a pandemic, including the need for social distancing. While we cannot be physically together (yet!), together we can still put our faith, hope and love into action to live out the UMW Purpose in every street, neighborhood, village, and city within the Michigan Conference.

Together in Mission,

**Julia Paradine-Rice**  
[jparadinerice@gmail.com](mailto:jparadinerice@gmail.com)  
(989)576-0675



**VICE PRESIDENT WALTHA GAYE LEAVITT**

My first planning of the Annual Celebration is behind me...and virtual at that. Thanks to all who helped plan and were involved in the production. I thought it went well. Hopefully Counterpart training went well also. I enjoyed putting faces to the names and hearing their questions and concerns. These are certainly uncertain times, but we can make the most of them. Maybe now is the time for self-education (using the Reading Program) or involving oneself in Faith Talks or other virtual learning or planning programs where mentoring and positive role models are featured.

Tracey Weaver Brame, J.D. who runs the West Michigan Public Defender Clinic in Grand Rapids, spoke to us about racial inequality. African Americans comprise about 18% of the preschool (less than 5 years of age) population, but they comprise almost half of the students who are suspended. African American first-time offenders are suspended at rates that are double or more than whites.

These are the times to start the process of repairing those statistics. Zero tolerance is not the best way. Children become labeled which leads to a mind set of worthless, trouble-maker, not worth anything, stupid... Kids are removed from the safety and structure of school so they "hang out" with

other suspended kids. Strong school discipline also paints authority figures as unfair, untrustworthy and the "enemy".

Mrs. Brame gave us some simple strategies. We need to start with looking within us to see our own biases. We need to support innovative efforts to provide safe, positive, engaging, empowering educational environment for all our young people. We need to rethink how we look at school discipline and the efficacy of removing children from learning environments as punishments. All people were created equal- and so we need to treat as equals- with love and fairness.

There is much to do, but thankfully we can do our part.

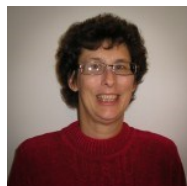
**Waltha Gaye Leavitt**  
**wally@cmsinter.net**  
**(989)640-0238**


**OUTGOING COMMUNICATIONS**  
**MEMBER KATHY FREELAND**

It has been my pleasure to serve as your newsletter editor for the past four years, the first two as editor for the Detroit Conference UMW newsletter, and the last two as editor of The Voice. I have been blessed to work with 3 other amazing ladies—Sally Messner, who will now take over the reigns as Communications; Amber Hassler, who covers our social media; and Diana Miller, who runs the website!

Of course, our jobs couldn't be done without the great writing by all of the members of the Leadership Team, including the District Presidents, the national and jurisdictional officers, and others who help to fill in the gaps! I wish you all the best, and look forward to seeing the great writing and passion that I have come to associate with United Methodist Women! Please continue to spread the word about how e-mail addresses can help us save mission money to use for women, children, and youth around the world!

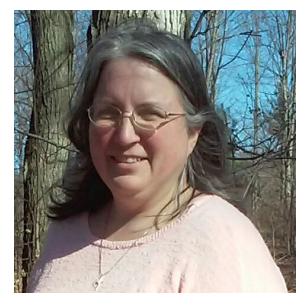
**Kathy Freeland**  
**ksfdaf@sbcglobal.net**  
**(989)843-5247**


**WORDS FROM THE WEBMASTER**  
**(Communications)**

The new Standing Rules are now on the website. Check out all the annual meeting speakers and programs on [https:// www. umwmichiganconference.org/AnnualMeetingResources2020. html](https://www.umwmichiganconference.org/AnnualMeetingResources2020.html)

All districts need to get their leadership lists and their calendars to Diana Miller for their webpage, Sally Messner for the 2021 Directory and reports, and Email and addresses to Sally for the 2021 newsletter THE VOICE

**[diana@ddmiller.net](mailto:diana@ddmiller.net)**  
**[sallymessner@yahoo.com](mailto:sallymessner@yahoo.com)**





## FROM THE TREASURER

### **FINAL OFFERING FROM MICHIGAN CONFERENCE UMW CELEBRATION!**

The "final" total for the OFFERING we received for the Michigan Conference UMW ANNUAL CELEBRATION was \$3,140. This came from about 120 participants. Thank you all VERY MUCH. The money will be distributed as follows: \$1,237 to Pledge to Mission to UMW National, \$1,337 to UMCH (United Methodist Community House in Grand Rapids), and \$566 to the Legacy Fund. What a wonderful Celebration we had and what a wonderful way to show our commitment to serving Women, Children and Youth!

**Mary Danforth, Treasurer**  
m19danforth44@gmail.com  
(734)649-4849



### **MISSION COORDINATOR FOR MEMBERSHIP NURTURE & OUTREACH**

The UMW Census is now the 2020 'Unit Survey'. It is a 32 step/ question survey of basic info on your Unit and some yes/no questions. Access the online form @ [www. unitedmethodistwomen. org/ census 2020](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/census2020).

I want to take this time to encourage all district officers to contact their unit presidents or unit members to take the survey! Blessings.

**Cindy Thiele**  
cinahthiele@gmail.com  
(269)673-4514



### **INCOMING MISSION COORDINATOR FOR SOCIAL ACTION**

I'm a member of the Greater Detroit district, completing my tenure as Social Action Coordinator for the last four years. With this experience, this should help me with this position.

I'm looking forward and so excited to meeting new faces, making friends, and working with you all regarding social issues facing women and children in Michigan

and abroad.

With your help and with your continuous service we can continue to contribute and follow the 2021-2024 goals from our National office. by keeping informed of Alerts and informing our local churches and striving for justice for all.

Feel free to drop me an email or call with any ideas you may have regarding social action.

May God Bless You All!

**Jocelyn Davis**

missyjdavis32@gmail.com

(248)722-8638 cell

(248)559-1430 home



### **OUTGOING SECRETARY OF PROGRAM RESOURCES**

Thanks for all the support I received as the Secretary of Program Resources from my sisters in United Methodist Women. This was a joyful experience because I love to read and discuss books with others. Remember to revisit "The Purpose of the Reading Program" found in the Reading Catalog. Also share the "Faith Talks" with others during this time of the Quarantine and Pandemic-they were inspirational moments.

I have downloaded my connection to my online library and the Hoopla App. This is some of the information that has been shared. Also, you can go to the library and have the librarian order books for a book club.

Continue reading books in our selection because they open your eyes to God's mission for us as well as increase your sensitivity to all human being and how to understand and be an activist for Women, Children and Youth. Continue working in Faith, Hope and Love.

**Brenda Lee Street**

bstreet992157@gmail.com

(248)568-0419

Retired Secretary of Program Resources

A Permanent Reading Program Advocate





## **INCOMING SECRETARY OF PROGRAM RESOURCES**

So many books; so little time!

As I begin my new position as Secretary of Program Resources, I think of all the books I have read from the UMW Reading Program. I love to read and this is the perfect position for me.

Every year I strive to reach Level IV on the program. Previously I was a reader for the program, where I helped evaluate the books that are placed on the reading list. I can't wait to share the books that I have read with you. Please feel free to contact me with questions or just to talk books.

I look forward to meeting all of you and sharing the reading program with you.

**Ruth Sutton**

**Suttonr1@charter.net**  
**(989)708-9968**



## **MESSAGE FROM RUBY ANDERSON, ELECTED FOR A 2ND TERM TO THE NATIONAL UMW TEAM!**

### **Relationships Build Membership**

I am thankful for the many relationships I have formed in the United Methodist Women. However, our greatest relationship in life is with Christ our Savior. Our relationship with Christ teaches us how to love one another. It teaches us how to support and give where there is a need. We as UMW are called and willing to give of our time, talents, and resources.

2020 has been challenging due to Covid19, but God has shown us that we can still be in service for him and not lose touch with one another, and reach new contacts. That's what we want to do, reach new women, and have them join us in our journey in mission for women, children and youth. We are getting better at Zoom, Facebook, YouTube and other media resources. It is my prayer that new victories are right around the corner. With God all things are possible.

Relationships and membership growth go hand in hand. Our legacy depends on it. We need the help of every member.

**Ruby Anderson,**  
**National Director**  
**United Methodist Women**



## **MESSAGE FROM OUTGOING NATIONAL DIRECTOR TAYLORIE BAILEY**

### **Phil 4:13**

Greetings my sisters and brothers, It is an honor and a joy to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to my local church, Trinity Faith – Detroit, the Greater Detroit District and the Michigan Conference for being granted the opportunity to serve at the highest level of our organization as a National Director for the last 2 quadrennials. And as a personal privilege in this public manner, thanks to the leadership of both Michigan conferences and every United Methodist Woman who has supported me with your love, kindness and words of encouragement during these past 2 quadrennials.

During this time, I fully participated in ministry and mission to women, children and youth, locally, nationally and around the world as a representative from Liberia, Detroit and Michigan.

It was a blessing to serve with other sisters from the Michigan area: Sister Mildred Braddock on the Nomination Committee from North Central Jurisdiction, sister Suzanne Hewitt as a member on the Program Advisory Group and Sister Ruby Anderson as another Director. The Greater Detroit district has been truly blessed to have 2 National Directors and a member of the North Central Jurisdiction serving during the last Quadrennial.

**Taylorie Bailey,**  
**Former National Director**  
**United Methodist Women**





### **MESSAGE FROM OUTGOING PROGRAM ADVISORY GROUP MEMBER SUZANNE HEWITT : MY HOLY SPIRIT STORY**

My four year tenure with the national UMW Program Advisory Group (PAG) has come to an end. As I step away, please hear my Holy Spirit story.

The first day of our first meeting I sat at a lunch table of UMW Regional Missionaries from all around the world. Dr. Catherine Akala, from Yaounde, the capital city of Cameroon Africa, and I became quick friends. I shared with her that my church, Grand Rapids Trinity UMC, had a holy connection to the United Methodist Church Cameroon: a college student came to the United States and God sent him to worship with us. Ultimately, Victor returned to Cameroon and started UM churches. Catherine knew this story and knew Victor well. Now 30 years later the Cameroon Mission Initiative will soon be a district of the Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) Conference. October 2020, UMC Volunteers-in-Mission (VIM) held Cameroon Virtual Mission to begin to explore the third mission experience when we can travel safely. I participated in this with 25 global friends.

United Methodist Women is actively serving women, children and youth through the pandemic and pathways to sustainable income. Michigan Conference and District UMW Facebook pages have had recent postings from UMW Cameroon because the women are looking to connect with us and build relationships. Through the decades, across the ocean, in our connectional church and among active disciples of Jesus, the Holy Spirit remains with us! Please engage, encourage and energize one another by responding to the posts from Cameroon. See **United Methodist Women Association Cameroon - UMWAC** or **contact me for more information:**

**Suzanne McKenzie Hewitt**  
**suzmckhew@gmail.com**  
**(616)334-9614**



### **EAST WINDS CO-PRESIDENT LYNN GEER**

East Winds District UMW has greatly appreciated Zoom and the number of connections we have been able to make during this pandemic. Our local leadership training used the [umwmichiganconference.org](http://umwmichiganconference.org) website to share job descriptions. Diana Miller placed our document EWD Local Elected Leaders Basic Structure on the web. It is a compilation from an older UMW Handbook (thanks to Kathy Abke) and available to all.

**Lynn Geer, East Winds co-president**  
**lynngeer@aol.com**

### **GREATER DETROIT DISTRICT OUTGOING PRESIDENT KAY KORNS**

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve on United Methodist Women district and conference leadership teams. I appreciate those who served with me and are now good friends.

I have learned much and am still learning about United Methodist Women and all they have to offer. Take advantage. I look forward to when we will be able to be together again.

Though my term has ended I will return to the Greater Detroit District Leadership Team as Immediate Past President.

**Kay Korn, Outgoing President**

**k.korns@gmail.com**

**(734)671-0005**

### **MIDWEST DISTRICT OUTGOING PRESIDENT SUE RIETMAN**

This is my last time writing you as your president and it is a bittersweet moment for me. I've enjoyed representing the Midwest District and all of you. I have met many new friends over my tenure in this office and was pleased to bring you many interesting and informative events.

As you all know by now, our District Annual Meeting was held by newsletter and ballot. I received your ballots and was pleased by your overwhelming support of the new Midwest District team members. I was greatly warmed by the many notes of kind thanks for my years of service in my role as president of the district. I thank you all so much.

Our Day Apart at LeValley UMC was also cancelled due to the present conditions in our state. The ladies will be planning for next year's event in 2021. As with most of our well-planned events for this year, it will be a rollover to 2021. Our new team is hard at work planning next year with a fervent hope of success at being able to hold them. Only time will tell what happens.

I end my term of office as your president of the Midwest District with the same hope and prayer I started with in 2016. United Methodist Women is and always has been very important in my life. It will continue to be my guiding light as I go forward to do other things with UMW.

I pass on to my successor, Jean Sherman, the torch and headaches of the job. She will be a great president for the district. I wish her and all the new members of the team a wonderful term in office.

**With love and gratitude,**

**Susan Rietman**

**Midwest District President (until January of 2021)**

**MID-MICHIGAN DISTRICT PRESIDENT  
DONNA KLEIVER**

During this challenging time in our nation and world, I send you blessings. The Mid-Michigan District has not been as active as we would like to have been in 2020 as our Leadership Team and many of our units have been unable to meet. With the coronavirus concerns, self-quarantine and unable to gather for face-to-face activities we have had to cancel all of our programs and meetings for 2020 from March 2020 through January 2021's Epiphany Celebration.

In addition, the Leadership Team decided not to hold a Zoom District Annual meeting because of technical complications and getting all of the logistics in order. In place of the Zoom, a mail in ballot and Annual information was provided in the September, *"The Messenger"*; and, we were able to pass our 2021 slate of officers, budget and changes to our Standing Rules. We are planning and looking forward to a face-to-face Spiritual Growth Retreat in May 2021, depending on state and CDC guidelines. As President, my goal for 2021 is to do as much as we can to interact with our district units while working around the coronavirus issues. I look forward to the time when we can greet each other in person. In the meantime I send prayers for health and hope that you may discover new ways to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, with your loved ones.

**Blessings of Love,  
Donna Kleiver, Mid-Michigan District UMW  
dmkleiver2016@gmail.com  
(517)663-4193**

**GREATER SOUTHWEST DISTRICT PRESIDENT  
LINDA BURTON-COLLIER**

We are all looking forward to a new year and planning for that new year is different than it was in 2019. We have learned a lot in 2020 but most of all we have learned to adapt, to change from our something old to something new. We have learned that wearing a mask won't kill us but Covid-19 could, we have learned that not meeting in person can be done thanks to the internet and sites like Zoom. We have learned that a new normal can be found, but most of all we have learned that God hasn't changed, God is still good all the time.

When it was decided that we couldn't do our district annual meeting on Zoom we already had our speaker, Sandra Bibliomo's recorded presentation. I encourage each of you to go to the conference website where you will find it under our district and listen to her discussion on "economic equality/inequality". Sandra also encourages us to read "So you want to talk about race," which is on our reading program list.

When the district team met in October to begin to discuss what 2021 was going to look like for our district United Methodist Women we asked the following questions: Would we be able to meet in person any time soon? Could we ask local units to host a meal with our events? What were the possibilities of meeting outdoors? The only thing that we could decide for sure was that if local units were not comfortable putting on a meal with our meetings we could encourage box lunches. Planning an outside event isn't easy because weather plays a major factor. We would all love to meet in person again and hopefully that will happen again but when is any one's guess. It would be nice to be able to plan a hybrid .

**Linda Burton-Collier  
Greater Southwest District UMW President  
lindaburtoncollier@gmail.com  
(269)793-7340**





**HERITAGE DISTRICT UMW PRESIDENT  
SHERRY WAGENKNECHT**

"Knitted Together for God's Work"! I love the title of the new UMW Program Book! We are all, no matter where we are in our districts, the state, the nation or the world, working together to help make a better place for women, youth and children. We are a work in progress and have been for more than 150 years. No matter what comes our way we have stuck together. Even a virus can't stop us from working for justice and peace. This year the UMW districts all across the state of Michigan are working together to provide our Annual Celebrations as a Virtual Meeting! ***We are knitted together!***

The Heritage District had its Virtual Meeting September 26<sup>th</sup> and our Officer Training November 14<sup>th</sup>. The Annual meeting went very well, with 85 registrants. The theme was **Sowing the Seeds of God's Love**. Rev. Tim Kobler, Director/Chaplin Wesley Foundation at the University of Michigan, spoke on "Cultivating Discipleship"; and Shonagh Taruza, "The Wind of Change". We had powerful prerecorded music, prayer, and a business meeting. Follow this link to the Conference Webpage and you can find the links to our program and speakers. <https://www.umwmichiganconference.org/hrd.html>

On November 14<sup>th</sup> we had our Local Leadership Team Training. "Knitted Together for Gods Work", the new Program Book title, gave us inspiration for this unusual training. We continue with our search for a secretary and treasurer for our team. Please contact me if you have an interest in getting involved.

With so many changes in our Nation and our World we all need to stay focused on God's Work. The last meeting of the year, a combined meeting for the Leadership teams of 2020 & 2021 will be on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. We were hoping to meet together but again will be on Zoom. Thank you and stay safe! God's blessings to all of you!

**Sherry Wagenknecht**  
**wagen88@hotmail.com**  
**(734)347-5856**



**NORTHERN SKIES DISTRICT UMW PRESIDENT  
PATTI STEINBERG**

Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

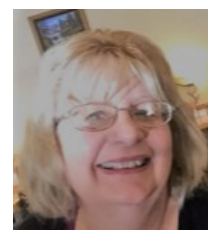
We meet as United Methodist Women, some virtually... some in person, as we take on the words of our Savior, giving us Peace and untroubled hearts.

With that in mind, as a district team, we have meet via Zoom twice and have accomplished much! Our 2020 Annual Celebration consisted of mail in ballots and \$565 raised for God's Country Cooperative Parish through mail in donations. Praise God!

Our next meeting will be virtually on January 27, 2021. We usually don't meet in January because the weather is unpredictable so we are finding the silver lining of 2020.

Have a good and Godly day!

**Patti Steinberg**  
**142 Indian Lake Dr.**  
**Crystal Falls, MI 49920**  
**(906)367-2128**



**NORTHERN WATERS OUTGOING PRESIDENT  
SUSAN WIRGAU**

This is my "swan song" article. Four years ago, when I became the Grand Traverse District president, we were looking at becoming a combined District #3 which was later and is presently known as Northern Waters. As we went through steering committee meetings, feelings were many and varied but we managed to survive. Putting it in God's hands, we even found a new secretary and treasurer, vacated due to tenure limits.

Thinking we had made it through and we could get back to doing what makes us UMW, more rumblings of a church split were evident and we wondered how it would affect UMW and this President was on her knees again. Before that got to the boiling point, March 2020 hit and we found ourselves in a viral world which changed nearly daily. New jargon and processes emerged.

Even during a tumultuous year marked by a global pandemic and social unrest, we must still pause to give thanks for the relationships we have. While social distancing has made it more difficult to meet in person, more Americans have expressed interest in reconnecting with long lost friends and family.

I give thanks for the many sisters I have met through the conference and district teams and local units whom I have had the opportunity to meet and love. It's been a pleasure to serve you and with you.

**Susan Wirgau**  
**onthebay@chartermi.net**  
**(231)838-5986**

Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church

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

**United Methodist Women**

PO Box 195, Mayville, MI 48744



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***The Voice***-- the official Newsletter for Michigan Conference United Methodist Women; Is published three times this year: January, May, August

Submissions requested by the 10th of each previous month  
to: Sally Messner, [sallymessner@yahoo.com](mailto:sallymessner@yahoo.com)

## *2021 Calendar of Events*

<b>Feb. 20</b>	<b>Michigan Conference UMW Team Meeting</b>	<b>ZOOM Meeting</b>
<b>May 15</b>	<b>Michigan Conference UMW Team Meeting</b>	<b>ZOOM Meeting</b>
<b>July 7-10</b>	<b>Mission u of the West</b>	<b>Albion College</b>
<b>July 24</b>	<b>Mission u of the South</b>	<b>Troy Big Beaver UMC</b>
<b>Aug. 14</b>	<b>Michigan Conference UMW Team Meeting &amp; Finance</b>	<b>ZOOM Meeting</b>
<b>Aug.19-21</b>	<b>Mission u of the East</b>	<b>Lake Huron Retreat Center</b>
<b>Oct.18-19</b>	<b>Mission u of the North</b>	<b>Gaylord UMC</b>
<b>Oct. 23</b>	<b>Conference Annual Celebration</b>	<b>Kalamazoo</b>
<b>Nov. 13</b>	<b>Michigan Conference UMW Team Meeting</b>	<b>TBD</b>