



THE PHOENIX GREATER DETROIT DISTRICT WINTER 2021 NEWSLETTER



Morning Prayer

May today there be peace within.
May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.
May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you.
May you be confident knowing you are a child of God.
Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance,
praise and love.
It is there for each and every one of us.
St. Therèse of Lisieux and St. Theresa of Avila

President



Hopeful 2021

In the midst of civil unrest and a worldwide pandemic, we must have hope. “These are the times that try men’s souls.” (Thomas Paine) But our God is faithful. As I approach this new year in this new position, I admit that I am a little frightened. I don’t want to mess up, or be a bad leader, or, or, or... But I am clinging to the word of the Lord as he spoke to Joshua, a new leader, who was also scared. “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

My goals are simple:

1. Approach everything in a hopeful manner. Who needs a “down” attitude?
2. Get the work of our GDD out throughout the District. I commit to an article in the District’s Newsletter

3. Get 10 more women involved in the work of the United Methodist Women by June 1, 2021.
4. Create and maintain an active prayer and praise list. When we pray, I want us to have a list of our prayer concerns before us. My time frame is to have this done by January 31, 2021.

Please feel free to share your ideas to make a more robust Greater Detroit District United Methodist Women. Let us pledge to walk through 2021 with hope.

Jeanette Harris

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Vice-President



I am honored, blessed and excited to serve. My greatest attributes are my caring nature, encouraging others, as well as my attention to detail and organizational skills. I enjoy working as part of a team, which always brings positive results to every situation.

I have two children, a college student and high school student. My hobbies are cooking, baking, reading, watching classic movies and spending quality time with my family and dear friends.

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Treasurer

First, I thank my Heavenly Father for allowing me to see the year 2021 and also allowing me to serve Him as Treasurer of the Greater Detroit District United Methodist Women. I also thank God 2020 is behind us. It was a year we will remember, and it was like none other, at least in my lifetime. It was, and still is, a challenge for everyone, regardless of age, sex, race, etc.

It was and also continues to be a challenge for the United Methodist Women. Some churches are closing, and many churches no longer participate with Mission Giving to the UMW district. For several years, there has been a steady decline in UMW participation. We had a goal of \$80,000 but we finished 2020 Mission Giving with a grand total of \$66,989 (\$62,540.75 Mission Giving, \$3,745.04 Supplementary Giving, \$703.69 Legacy Fund). This amount is much lower than 2019, due to COVID-19. As always, we are grateful for all monies received, small or large, that help the UMW mission.

One positive thing from 2020 and the stay-at-home order, it helped me become more organized. Therefore, I will be contacting Unit Treasurers to find out your 2021 Unit Pledge. This will help the Greater Detroit District in setting a more realistic 2022 pledge goal to the UMW Michigan Conference.

My offer remains the same as in a prior newsletter. If your church no longer has a UMW unit, please feel free to send a personal check to me made out to "Greater Detroit District UMW". Be sure to provide the name of your church on the memo line, and it will receive the credit. Or, you can go to the United Methodist Women website and give directly online. Most of the younger generation love this method because they never carry cash or write checks. Our main goal is to continue support to the United Methodist Women. As reported in **response** magazine, "Mission Giving is faith, hope and love

in action and supports programs in the United States and around the world that benefit women, children and youth, including national mission institutions, international ministries, regional missionaries, grants, and deaconesses and home missionaries, as well as spiritual growth, transformative education, leadership development and service and advocacy opportunities for members.”

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Spiritual Growth

Lorraine Murdoch, our Spiritual Growth Coordinator, battled one health challenge after the other including cancer, COVID-19 and various infections. During our Greater Detroit District Leadership meetings, she would share a story or posting to remind us of our connection to God and each other. Unfortunately, we recently lost Lorraine, a United Methodist Woman who had a great faith and a strong relationship with her Lord. We know she is at peace and she is with God. Please keep Lorraine and her family in your prayers.



I love the Lord, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came over me; I was overcome by distress and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the Lord: “Lord, save me!” The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The Lord protects the unwary; when I was brought low, he saved me. Return to your rest, my soul, for the Lord has been good to you. Psalm 116:1-7

Education and Interpretation

Social-justice seeker Jill is a retired nonprofit CEO (Methodist Federation for Social Action, Planned Parenthood, YWCA, etc.) and adjunct faculty member teaching nonprofit management and grant writing. She loves her new vocation as a professional grandma. Her daughter Alison Warren, son-in-law Carlos Bustamante, and grandson Rhys Alejandro Bustamante-Warren, live in Ypsilanti. Jill and her husband are in a COVID pod with them so Jill is able to be with Rhys 3 days a week (and she loves it!).

Like many of us, Jill used to spend lots of time in church and she really misses hugs, singing and communion at Ferndale First. Her husband, Bob Schoenhals, has been serving there as pastor since 2013 and will retire in May 2022 (mandatory retirement age).

Here are a couple of tidbits about Jill: She once golfed with President Gerald Ford (!) and she has taught Sunday School since age 16.

Jill agreed to serve as an act of gratitude for so many who have served. She is inspired to learn more from her sisters of color. Note: she rarely answers phone calls and responds better to texts and emails if you need to reach her.

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Secretary of Program Resources

Hello to All!

Welcome to the 2021 – 2022 United Methodist Women Reading Program. It is a new year, and we have a new list of books. You can find them at <http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/readingprogram> through Goggle and then go to the 2021 list. This year's list is for two years and has the standard five categories: **Education for Mission, Leadership Development, Nurturing for Community, Social Action, and Spiritual Growth.** For those of you who are not familiar with the Reading Program, you must read one book in each category and the **response** magazine for the first level. There are three other levels in the program. All that information can be found on the website noted above along with the many titles. There are also some books that are listed as Bonus Books and these count for two books. Some of them are the Mission u books.

Two of the books that I will be reading from this list are:

- “Anxious to Talk About it: Helping White Christians Talk Faithfully About Racism” by Carolyn Helsel
- “Rise! From Caged Bird to Poet of the People, Maya Angelou” by Bethany Hegedus

These both relate to the current issues about race in our society. A way to use the Reading Program is to have reading groups where you read the book and discuss it. These discussions can be virtual. Or a review of a book can be done by one person, sharing it by publishing their review.

As has been true in the last two years, you can get your books one of three ways:

1) your public library; 2) any bookstore; 3) Amazon, where if you go to the Smile program, you can set it up for United Methodist Women to receive a portion of the sales.

Ms. Andris Salter, Operations Manager, United Methodist Women, reports: “The purpose of the Reading Program is to better understand and participate in God’s mission today, to increase sensitivity to all human beings, to explore contemporary issues, and enhance and act on self-knowledge.”

I look forward to serving you this year as your District Program Resources person. Should you need to reach me, you can email me, text me, or call me.

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Book Review

The United Methodist Women reading list for 2021 is chock-full of wonderful titles within several categories as stated in Mary Beltzman's report noted above. In addition to adult books, there are several young adult novels that bear mentioning. Here is a brief review of Angie Thomas' "The Hate U Give" which is not only a thought-provoking book but also was made into a movie of the same name (which can be streamed from various sources).



Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer who mistakes a hairbrush in Khalil's hand for a gun.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life. Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, this is a powerful and gripping YA novel about one girl's struggle for justice. <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/32075671-the-hate-u-give>

Co-Communications Coordinators

What a widening use of internet technology! Because of COVID-19, access to it is essential for all students, for contact with family and friends, and for Church worship and meetings. And United Methodist Women must meet "online".

United Methodist Women members need to periodically check the District and Conference websites to keep their Units aware of activities and goals. Those with access need to keep members without access informed.

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

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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A Prayer for Putting on a Face Mask

Creator God, as I prepare to go into the world, help me to see the sacramental nature of the wearing of this cloth. Let it be a tangible and visible love for my neighbors, as I love myself.

Christ Jesus, since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart, that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes. Since my voice may be muffled, help me to speak clearly, not only with my words, but with my actions.

Holy Spirit, as the elastic touches my ears, remind me to listen carefully and caringly to all those I meet. May this simple piece of cloth be shield and banner, and may each breath that it holds be filled with Your love. In Your name, and in that love, I pray. Amen.

Rev. Richard Bott, Presbyterian Church of Canada, Courtesy of the Midwest District *Anchor* and *The Messenger* (January 2021).

News from UMW Units

Detroit Metropolitan United Methodist Women

Like many, our unit has not been able to meet in person although we have done so through online platforms. Our Rice Allen Fund has supported several community programs this year and here are two we recently funded and want to share:

Free Little Library



We partnered with Detroit #1 Kiwanis club to install a free little library at the Methodist Children's Home Society. The library is dedicated to Beverly Sprau, a long-time active member of Metropolitan's UMW. Her grandson, Scott Sprau, painted and installed the library. We know Beverly would be pleased to have her name associated with this worthwhile project - especially one dedicated to books and kids!



Rhymes with Reason, under the auspices of the Downtown Boxing Gym Youth Program, uses popular music lyrics to teach contextual lessons that explore vocabulary on multiple levels including definition, context and figurative language. Serving youth grades 3 – 12 from 32 zip codes across metro Detroit, this program focuses on providing high quality educational opportunities that these youth deserve. Student participants will go on to be the next generation of leaders, business owners, entrepreneurs and change makers! Boxing brings the kids

in. Education, life lessons and a group of adults preaching positivity and seeing potential in kids surrounded by negativity is why they stay.

Stitches for Our Girls is a program run by the United African Women Organization (UAWO). The group envisioned ways to help young girls attain skills that could help them thrive. They started sewing classes where young girls spent time learning how to sew dresses for themselves, quilts, and bedcovers. With COVID-19, little did they know that our investment in girls was going to pay off. The girls used their skills to sew masks that were donated to over 75 families at Freedom House in Detroit, Michigan. The girls tirelessly have embodied this program and are making more masks donated to those in the community who need free cloth masks.

Southfield Hope United Methodist Women



Community Trunk or Treat

On Saturday, October 24, 2020, our unit was blessed with a beautiful sunny day to help in celebrating Southfield Hope United Methodist Church's Annual Halloween Trunk or Treat event. It was an opportunity for us to support the United Methodist Women focus on outreach to women, children, and youth.

Two trunks were filled with treats to appeal to babies, ‘tweens, teens, and young adults, as well as seniors.

We enjoyed the company of more than 100 children costumed as a variety of modern-day mascots and media characters, as well as firefighters and even a replica television set. It was a family environment. The well-behaved children’s eyes were filled with excitement as they anticipated each treat-filled trunk.

Our unit’s celebration committee ensured the safety of our guests with pre-packaged candies. We practiced safe personal protection and distancing to minimize exposure from guest to guest and each other as directed by the State of Michigan COVID-19 guidelines.

We look forward to 2021 and the opportunities for mission activities that serve the community, even in this unusual time.

Emmie J. Hawkins, Former Communications Coordinator
Southfield Hope United Methodist Women

Mission Work During the Pandemic



United Methodist Women members of Southfield Hope United Methodist Church continued to focus on social action and social awareness during the 2020 Pandemic. One member, Alberta Garrett, suggested an innovative and safe way to provide relief to others globally. The unit embraced the idea of a partnership with Soles 4 Souls and Zappos for Good to provide gently-used shoes to others who have been affected by this health and economic crisis. We were able to do this project by following the CDC guidelines and conducting Zoom meetings. Participants collected shoes, boxed them, and masked up to take the boxes to a nearby UPS facility for mailing. One hundred eighty-five pairs of shoes were collected with an estimated value of \$1,500.

Many thanks to all participants: Mildred Braddock, Loretta Brown, Roxanne Chatman, Tina Coleman, Dianne Cross, Alberta Garrett, Gloria Hardy, Susan Howze, Mandolyn Jones, Jacque Lewis-Kemp, Emma Oliver, Karen Shannon-Poore, Roberta M. Saunders, LaRuth Shepherd, Alice Tucker and Rosemary Williams.

Roberta M. Saunders, Social Action Chair
Southfield Hope United Methodist Women

In the Time of Pandemic

And the people stayed home.
And they read books, and listened, and rested, and
exercised, and made art, and played games, and
learned new ways of being, and were still.

And they listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed.

And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery

This poem was written about the 1918 pandemic but it is more than just a reminder of what people went through. It speaks to the importance of healing not only the body, but the world around you. Many of you may be familiar with the author and his many works, including "The Little Prince". He wrote the novella during World War II, after Germany's invasion of France had forced him to give up aviation and flee to New York. The novella's nostalgia for childhood reflects both his homesickness for France and his hope of returning to a time of peace. He did return to fly for France during the war and was thought to have been shot down in 1944 somewhere near the French coast.

Legacy Stories



Susan Angeline Collins was an early trailblazer for United Methodist Women. Following the U.S. Civil War, Collins went to college and became a successful business owner. All before answering her call to serve the Methodist Church in missions to Africa.

Collins was a remarkable woman before she ever entered the mission field. Born in Illinois in 1851, the daughter of an indentured servant, she was the first African American student to attend Upper Iowa University. She went on to own her own laundry business in Huron, Dakota.

Interestingly, at the time, people would bring in their dirty laundry wrapped in old newspaper. Ms. Collins unfolds this newspaper scrap and in there is an advertisement for the Chicago Training School. She sold the laundry to follow a call to attend that school for home and foreign missions.

The desire to share the message of Jesus drove her, at the age of 36, to leave for Africa. Starting in 1887, she worked 13 years for no pay under what was known as a self-supporting mission. Serving under this model made it difficult to afford necessities like shoes, but care packages from back home in Iowa sustained Collins' work. Despite hardships, Collins established a boarding school which housed over 50 girls.

In 1900, Collins returned to Iowa and was told, at age 50, she was too old to continue as a missionary. She immediately began raising funds for a return passage to Africa. The Pacific branch of the Methodist Woman's Foreign Missionary Society helped Collins resume her work in Angola, this time with pay. She served 18 more years.

Collins was able to purchase a home in Iowa where she retired and became a beloved member of the community and her local Methodist Episcopal Church. Collins passed away in 1940, weeks shy of her 89th birthday. Click on the link below for a short video highlighting Susan Angeline Collins' life.

<http://ee.umc.org/who-we-are/african-american-womans-incredible-life-as-a-methodist-missionary>

Ongoing Social Action

Did you know that the 1980 General Conference of the United Methodist Church adopted a "Charter for Racial Injustice in an Interdependent Global Community"? Here we are forty years later and the tenets we believe still stand. But what about the action steps in the second list below? Certainly, #8 requires more attention and advocacy in the days and years ahead.

Because we believe:

1. That God is the Creator of all people, and all are God's children in one family;
2. That racism is a rejection of the teachings of Jesus Christ;
3. That racism denies the redemption and reconciliation of Jesus Christ;
4. That racism robs all human beings of their wholeness and is used as a justification for social, economic, environmental and political exploitation;
5. That we must declare before God and before one another that we have sinned against our sisters and brothers of other races in thought, in word and in deed;
6. That in our common humanity in creation, all women and men are made in God's image, and all persons are equally valuable in the sight of God;
7. That our strength lies in our racial and cultural diversity and that we must work toward a world in which each person's value is respected and nurtured;
8. That our struggle for justice must be based on new attitudes, new understandings and new relationships, and must be reflected in the laws, policies, structures and practices of both church and state.

We commit ourselves as individuals and as a community to follow Jesus Christ in word and in deed, and to struggle for the rights and the self-determination of every person and group of persons.

Therefore,

as United Methodists in every place across the land, we will unite our efforts within the church to take the following actions:

1. Eliminate all forms of institutional racism in the total ministry of the church, giving special attention to those institutions that we support, beginning with their employment policies, purchasing practices, environmental policies and availability of services and facilities.
2. Create opportunities in local churches to deal honestly with the existing racist attitudes and social distance between members, deepening the Christian commitment to be the church where all racial groups and economic classes come together.
3. Increase efforts to recruit people of all races into the membership of The United Methodist Church and provide leadership development opportunities without discrimination.

4. Establish workshops and seminars in local churches to study, understand and appreciate the historical and cultural contributions of each race to the church and community.
5. Raise local churches' awareness of the continuing needs for equal education, housing, employment, medical care and environmental justice for all members of the community, and to create opportunities to work for these things across racial lines.
6. Work for the development and implementation of national and international policies to protect the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all people such as through support of the ratification of United Nations covenants on human rights.
7. Support and participate in the worldwide struggle for liberation in church and community.
8. Facilitate nomination and election processes that include all racial groups by employing a system that prioritizes leadership opportunities of people from communities that are disproportionately impacted by the ongoing legacy of racial injustice, and use measures to align our vision for racial justice with actions that accelerate racial equality.

Important Social Action Note!

United Methodist Women is winding down its five-year focus on Economic Inequality and the Living Wage Campaign. The focus is now on two campaigns: Just Energy for All and Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline, in the 2021-2024 Quadrennium. We will pass on further information as it becomes available.

She Leads: Empowering Women to Make a Difference

United Methodist Women invites you to be part of an observance in sisterhood with women from the local unit and your community. Every year, "A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial" encourages women to step out in faith and bring the love of Christ into a hurting world through their prayers and selfless giving.

This Year's Theme: In 2021, we will come together around the theme "She Leads: Empowering Women to Make a Difference." We welcome you to come pray, learn and offer your gifts that will make a real change in the lives of women, children and youth around the world. PRAY - As we unite in prayer, we prepare ourselves to listen. LEARN - As we learn about the impact of the Call to Prayer and Self-Denial, we also learn about the impact our giving has on the world. GIVE - As we generously give, we remember with confidence all that God has already done in and through us and all that God has yet for us to do. Join together to bring justice and inspire change, living into United Methodist Women's faith and action.

Host an observance this year or [give online](#) to support women, children and youth in your community and around the world.

Giving Makes a Difference

One hundred percent of the offering will go directly to fund these projects.

By your sacrificial giving to A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial, you, as members of United Methodist Women and predecessor organizations over the years, have:

- Built and equipped schools, libraries and clinics.
- Trained rural and urban women for specialized ministries.

- Provided nutrition and medical assistance for thousands of women, children and youth.
- Offered relief to those uprooted by wars and other disasters.
- Advocated for public policy changes to benefit women and children.
- Produced long-term economic benefits through income-generation and other self-help projects.

For further information, go to the website: <https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/call-to-prayer>

What Can We Do About COVID-19?

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment.

And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:36-39)

Wash your hands! Stay Home!

But that’s not all... United Methodist Women members are responding to the Coronavirus pandemic by supporting our households, our congregations and communities, and ourselves while also reaffirming our commitment to Social Justice Advocacy for women, youth and children. The pandemic has made visible the fractures in our society, where the most marginal communities are already being hard hit. This is true of many people in our nation, among them Native American tribes, Asian Americans facing racist vitriol, low-wage workers facing lay-offs with inadequate safety nets, women facing domestic violence while in quarantine, incarcerated people in close quarters unable to protect themselves from the virus, frontline workers, poor families who do not have reserves to stock up on groceries, people without homes to shelter in, undocumented immigrant workers who face job loss and cannot access federal programs, farm workers who pick our food yet don’t get paid sick leave or decent wages, children who do not have computers and internet to continue their schooling online, people with other chronic illnesses who continue to need medical care, and many, many others.

Emergency relief programs passed by Congress are important steps in expanding unemployment insurance, making cash payments, covering short-term sick leave and virus testing, extending loans to small businesses, and including self-employed and gig economy workers in emergency benefits. As debate over further packages continues, United Methodist Women urges members to advocate for federal relief and stimulus packages that put people and the earth first and build towards permanent solutions to economic inequality, structural racism, gender inequality and climate injustices.

Here are vital actions you can take to love your neighbor and reduce the impact of COVID-19 in your community:

- **Economic Justice:** When employees come to work sick, it not only hurts that individual and their family, it also hurts efforts to contain disease spread. Call on Congress to include in their fourth stimulus package universal paid sick days and paid family and medical leave for all employees, transferable from one job to another. These policies should be in place not only during the crisis but on a permanent basis. Contact your senators and congressperson and Speaker Nancy Pelosi, urging them to consider the New York State Paid Family Leave policy as the basis for action in the next emergency package. United States Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

- Coronavirus Shows Cracks in the Gig Economy, by Carol Barton: route50.com/finance/2020/03/coronavirus-shows-cracks-gig-economy/164176/ permanent basis. Contact your senators and congressperson and Speaker Nancy Pelosi, urging them to consider the New York State Paid Family Leave policy as the basis for action in the next emergency package. United States Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121.
- Mass Incarceration: Contact your governor today to urge the reduction of the prison population, prioritizing the immediate release of medically vulnerable people who pose no risk to public safety but would be themselves gravely endangered during a COVID-19 outbreak. Take action here: p2a.co/Jvxf2cE.
- Climate Justice: Contact your elected officials and urge them to include a moratorium on water and utility shutoffs and prioritize people and a regenerative economy in the next relief and stimulus package. More than half of the states are still allowing water and utility shutoffs, making hand washing and stay-at-home orders unsafe for those most financially distressed. Take action here: p2a.co/33iJHcC.
- Domestic Violence and Women's Health: Quarantine can be a dangerous situation for women and children who experience domestic violence. Calls to hotlines have increased as families remain at home. Support domestic violence hotlines in your community or nationally that are experiencing higher demand as people are isolated.
- Racial Justice: Bust racist myths and stereotypes and call out discrimination and abuse that target Asians and Asian Americans. There's a long and terrible history of using tragic disease outbreaks as a way to scapegoat vulnerable communities. Educate yourself, educate others and don't allow a medical crisis to give cover to racism. Read GCORR's statement here: gcorr.org/gcorr-denounces-trumps-racist-and-xenophobic-chinese-virus-language/. Learn more about anti-AAPI hate crimes: nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/asian-americans-report-nearly-500-racist-acts-over-last-week-n1169821 #WashTheHate.
- For more information on United Methodist Women Social Action responses to COVID-19, see:

<https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/what-can-we-do-about-covid19.pdf>

The Hill We Climb

Many of you watched the inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris and heard the reading of this poem by Amanda Gorman, who at 22 years is the youngest person to read a poem at a presidential inauguration. Yes, it was almost six minutes long but we feel it is important to re-print the full transcript here.

*When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade
We've braved the belly of the beast
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace
And the norms and notions
of what just is*

*Isn't always just-ice
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it
Somehow we do it
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken
but simply unfinished
We the successors of a country and a time
Where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one
And yes we are far from polished
far from pristine
but that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect
We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and
conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:
That even as we grieved, we grew
That even as we hurt, we hoped
That even as we tired, we tried
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious
Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division
Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree
And no one shall make them afraid
If we're to live up to our own time
Then victory won't lie in the blade
But in all the bridges we've made
That is the promise to glade
The hill we climb
If only we dare
It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit,
it's the past we step into
and how we repair it
We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy
And this effort very nearly succeeded*

*But while democracy can be periodically delayed
it can never be permanently defeated
In this truth
in this faith we trust
For while we have our eyes on the future
history has its eyes on us
This is the era of just redemption
We feared at its inception
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power
to author a new chapter
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves
So while once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?
Now we assert
How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?
We will not march back to what was
but move to what shall be
A country that is bruised but whole,
benevolent but bold,
fierce and free
We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next generation
Our blunders become their burdens
But one thing is certain:
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy
and change our children's birthright
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the west,
we will rise from the windswept northeast
where our forefathers first realized revolution
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states,
we will rise from the sunbaked south
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover
and every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful
When day comes we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,*

*if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it*

<https://thehill.com/homenews/news/535052-read-transcript-of-amanda-gormans-inaugural-poem>

Upcoming Events

At this time, the upcoming Prayer Gathering and Mission Workshop will be convened via Zoom. Registration information will be sent and then the Zoom link and program will be provided prior to the events. We can do this! We had over 100 attendees for our 2020 annual meeting and it was a success. The Spiritual Life Retreat is tentatively scheduled to be onsite. See future events listed below:

Prayer Gathering

**Saturday, February 13, 2021
10:00 AM**



Speaker: Rev. Ava Euper

Mission Workshop

**Saturday, March 13, 2021
10:00 AM**

Vista Maria



Residential Facility for Human Trafficking Survivors

Spiritual Life Retreat

**April 30-May 1, 2021
Lake Huron Retreat Center**



Retreat Leader: Mrs. Nichea VerVeer Guy