

## Treasurer's Information

As I write this, summer has just officially started with very hot temperatures in Southeast Michigan. But for this newsletter, I will be talking about fall (and thinking about cooler temperatures). **TRAINING for TREASURERS** will take place at Jackson First UMC on September 29th. I encourage all local treasurers from the new Heritage District to attend this training, if possible. There will be some changes as a result of the merging of the Detroit and West Michigan Conferences. I want to share some of the changes that will be a result of the new Conference level Standing Rules. This is also a great time to share ideas and issues with one another. The meetings are always quite productive. I learn a lot from each one of you and hope you learn a lot from me!

### PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

- All donations from local units should be made to your current District Treasurer (Albion or Ann Arbor) for the rest of 2018
- All donations shall be submitted by **NOVEMBER 1st, 2018** in order to be part of the 2018 year.
- The references to 5-star units and 5-star persons might mean nothing to some of you. **Please call or email me to discuss.**

Please note the following important dates:

### **September 15:** deadline for me to receive the following **IF YOU WANT TO RECEIVE YOUR CERTIFICATES and PINS AT THE ANNUAL TRAINING and ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING.**

- all donations to count towards being a 5-star unit;
- a list of the people who have been 5-star persons for 5, 10 or 15 years (they will receive a special pin);
- the list of 5-star persons for 2018. You may send me a copy of the 5-star person form or simply a list of the women/men in your unit who have qualified. A 5-star person form is included in this newsletter.

**September 29:** Heritage District UMW Annual Training and Organizational Meeting at Jackson First UMC.

**November 1:** 2019 completed pledge form to UMW. Note: This form is also included in this newsletter. You may turn in the form to me at the Annual Meeting on September 29 or mail it to me by November 1.

**November 1:** Final day for mission donations to count for 2018. **REMINDER:** All of our accounting will be based on the calendar year. If you don't get all of your money sent to me by September 15th, you will still be considered a 5-star unit if you get your donations in all 5 categories submitted to me by November 1. I will mail out 5-star unit and 5-star person certificates in December. Any donations received in November & December 2018, will be deposited in January 2019 and will count in that calendar year. If you make out checks after November 1st, you will need to make them out to the "Heritage District UMW". Any checks made out from now through October should be made out to "Ann Arbor District UMW" or "Albion District UMW", depending upon which former district your unit was part of. We will be closing our checking accounts in December and opening a new account with the Heritage District UMW name.

All 5-star person and 5-star unit information presented at the Heritage District UMW Annual Meeting is based on mission giving from January 1, 2018 – September 15, 2018. If all this is confusing to you, PLEASE try to attend the training on September 29, 2018. Have I mentioned the training date enough times?

All financial information submitted to the Conference UMW is based on the mission giving received from 12/1/17 through 11/1/18.

Let me know if you have any questions or corrections. Please contact me by email or phone. I enjoy hearing from you!

Thank you SO MUCH for all you do!

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## What Are You Giving?

I want you take a moment and stop what you are doing. Think about where you are on your faith journey. Maybe you are feeling close to God or maybe you feel that God is far from you. Wherever you find yourself know that God is with you and loves you unconditionally. In the devotion I am about to share with you, Lysa Terkeurst writes that 'God Wants Our Whole Heart'. I see this in my life as I seek a deeper relationship with God and as I discern the call to ministry. God wants my whole heart, not just a part of me. I find that I don't get very far when I try to do things on my own. Will you give God what is on your heart and trust that God will provide when faced with transitions, trials and change?

Lysa writes in the devotion "Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers his righteousness on you." Hosea 10:12 God wants us to get some things settled in our heart. One of the most crucial is deciding whether we are all-in when it comes to our relationship with Him. Do we want to walk in the fullness of His love and His plans? Or do we want to spend our lives chasing after the world's empty pleasures? Why not push the limits, live for the now and worry about eternity later? The enemy is very strategic with his plans to derail and distract us. He's clever by making his temptations seem so harmless. The problem is that we miss the whole point of our existence, the very purpose for which we were created. God made us for the relationship of His perfect love. But if we're always chasing after other things, we'll never experience the fullness of that love. There's a big difference between a half-hearted approach to God and whole-hearted devotion.

Hosea 10:2 opens with the initial appearance that all is well for the Israelites. They're flourishing and in a season of plenty. (Hosea 10:1) Anyone looking at them from the outside would probably assume God is pleased with them and greatly blessing them. But Hosea lets the Israelites know God is anything but pleased with them, and their season of plenty and fruitfulness is about to be replaced with one of destruction and barrenness. Why? Hosea 10:2 explains "Their heart is deceitful, and now they must bear their guilt. The Lord will demolish their altars and destroy their sacred stones. Their hearts were deceived and divided. Instead of worshipping God with their whole heart, the Israelites turned to their pagan altars. (Hosea 10:1) Instead of trusting in the Lord, they put their faith in their rebellious and evil kings. (Hosea 10:3-4, 7)

Thankfully, God is gracious in the midst of our wandering – beckoning us back home, calling us to repentance, offering us the chance to begin again. He holds out hope to the Israelites and to us in Hosea 10:12 'Sow righteousness for yourselves, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.'

Can't you just hear the Father's voice calling out to His people? Calling out to us? As if He's saying... "My wayward and wandering children turn back! Turn to Me! The path you are on is one that leads to destruction. One I cannot bless. But it's not too late! You haven't wandered too far. You can stop right now, right where you are, and return to Me. You can make wise and holy choices. Starting now. You can sow better seed. Today. Draw near to Me once again, and I will draw near to you. Repent of your sins and receive the fullness of My mercy, grace and forgiveness. Welcome Me even into the parts of your heart that have perhaps been hard and resistant to Me. Turn to Me. Seek Me. You will find Me waiting and ready to move in your life with amazing grace, unending love and incredible power."

Oh how I pray we will answer His call today. Let's seek God like never before. Let's turn to Him, follow Him and offer Him all that we are and all that we have. Blessings to you this day!

God Loves You And So Do I

Paula Vergowven  
Heritage District Secretary

## Mission Coordinator for Social Justice

For several years the Ypsilanti Community Library has hosted an Anti-Racism 101 series, in conjunction with the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice. The most recent session centered on white privilege. Although I am aware that all my life I have benefited from white privilege, still I am convinced I will not totally understand it simply because I am white. I am equally convinced that I should try to understand and so I attended that session. Back up one week to a discussion group on White Privilege at the United Church of Christ Women's Gathering in Tustin, Michigan. (My attendance at that gathering was because they asked me to offer fair trade items for sale and my UCC sisters are very generous in their support of that effort as well as welcoming me as a fellow participant in their activities.) A pastor, who was white, related an experience while she was taking classes toward ordination. She and another student both had sons in college and the time was approaching for those sons to return home for summer break. While the white mother was eagerly looking forward to having her son come home, the other woman, who was black, was dreading it, because she knew what her son would probably go through driving a car loaded with his belongings – being stopped by police, suspected of transporting stolen merchandise, spread-eagled against the car, maybe even handcuffed and taken into custody, or worse. White privilege – for most of us whites we have no idea.

Although my notes from that library session are sketchy, a couple of points stand out:

- 1) "The first step in leadership is not action; it is understanding."
- 2) "If you are not involved in continuous study on the issue, then your understanding is limited."

I believe those two points are relevant to all social justice issues. Regardless of what issue about which you choose to be concerned, your effectiveness will be enhanced as your understanding grows. Strive for that enhancement.

Back to my notes: Science has known for decades that there is no genetic basis for labeling someone according to race. Simply, at the biological level we are all humans. The labeling is a social thing. The term Caucasian was made up by a white man to promote the idea that whites are superior. And over the years the institutional systems have been set up and further developed to maintain the inequality. You and I may develop our understanding and in the process change our behaviors, but as long as the institutional systems of oppression are in place, the benefits of whiteness will remain. We must work to change the systems. But it starts with understanding and the continuous process towards greater understanding.

Over the years, the UMW Reading Program has included a number of books on racial justice. I encourage you to read them, even if you are not reading toward completion of any UMW reading level. A unit program on Racial Justice could further the understanding of a number of individuals. There might be someone in your local community who could serve as a resource for such a program. Planning for such a program could enhance one's understanding.

If I can help in any way, please give me a call. Let us be about the work of justice.

Malinda Waltz

## Reading Program Book Review

Marilee Woodworth, President of UMW, First United Church of Ann Arbor

*An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

Most Americans know that native people were here in this country before white people arrived, but we don't think about it too much. We know there was fighting. We might even have the impression that the Indians were the aggressors.

This book is written by a historian and is heavily referenced. Before white people arrived here, Indians lived throughout the country mostly in villages, mostly farming and hunting. They had a system of roads and governments. They did fight with each other occasionally for territory, but they never tried to completely annihilate each other. The truth is that this country was quite occupied by people. It was not empty.

I found this emotionally difficult to read. I feel I need to reevaluate my feelings of patriotism and what I thought was the history of my country.

This book describes how systematically the settlers/colonists and the government took the land, killed the inhabitants, destroyed their crops and animals that they depended on for food. It was genocide. The Indians did fight back. It was after all their home. But in the end, they were defeated and cheated out of their land. The brutality of the attacks, killing all – women, children, old people – occurred again and again. Treaties were made and then disregarded as the next wave of settlers came.

The book describes how our myth of a country created for freedom and liberty was built on the killing and taking land from the native people and on the slave labor of Africans brought here against their will. It was based on a white supremacist philosophy.

There is a law created by the colonizing nations and the Christian Church (at that time, the Catholic Church) called the Doctrine of Discovery that says that if a country "discovers" a new land and the inhabitants are not Christians, the land can be claimed by that country. The United States used this law to legitimize their conquest of the entire country.

Most of our heroes were directly involved in this. The author quotes a letter from George Washington to a Major General to "lay waste and not merely overrun but destroy, not listen to any overture of peace before the total ruin of their settlement is complete." This toward the Haudenosaunee tribe's village.

The author proposes that this beginning propelled the US to its current military might around the world. The US has military bases all around the globe, islands have had indigenous people removed to make way for military bases. The military still describes enemy territory as "Indian country".

Miraculously Indians still survive. And in recent years have made some progress in establishing themselves as legal entities. Many lawsuits have been placed to regain their land. And they have been recognized at the United Nations. Still, government and corporate forces try to cheat them out of land and resources.

This is not an easy book to read. I who was raised to be patriotic and believe my country is exceptional. It is important to know the truth. I thought I understood, that yes, we had taken the country from the Indians, but I did not really understand how purposeful, brutal, and systematic it was. And it is still going on. I think this is information that all citizens of the United States should understand. How can we go forward without knowing the truth?