

News, Connections & Joys

North Central Jurisdiction United Methodist Women

Volume 1, Issue 2 November 2021

Racial Justice Emotions Are Okay

I have been a part of three different zoom meetings within the last week where various United Methodist Women have expressed and shared some very personal emotions as it related to Racial Justice or Injustice towards our neighbors. Thinking back on what some of the ladies were saying and the conversations that were developing, made me think of an old article that I wrote for one of my Conference newsletters. I decided to dig that article out, make a few changes, update a bit, and share some of my thoughts in our NCJ newsletter. I was really surprised how much that old article is still very relevant today. Please feel free to share your thoughts or concerns as you read my re-written article below.

Society tells us that we should not show any emotions because it makes us less than a man or a woman. According to many of society's standards, being too expressive can be perceived as being weak. Expressing your feelings is part of being a human being. Of course, there are many ways to express our feelings, emotions, thought and concerns as long as we can do this in a healthy way and not with the intent to hurt one another in the process. In addition to expressing our emotions, we must remember that nothing happens without prayer and God leading our steps.

The "United Methodist Women Racial Justice Charter News", have spoken about our work with "Making a Difference for Racial Justice – For Such a Time as This" many times and in different ways. I am especially making reference to this article that was written in the March 2016 edition. This particular article tells me that it is okay to speak out and let our emotions, feelings, thoughts and concerns be heard to as many people that will listen and can do something to change things that are unjust in our society. The article also reminded me (us) that I (we) have a duty to speak out about things that are unjust. Because, if I (we) continue to stay silent about things that are not just and/or do not take some kind of action, then I (we) can also become the problem, or will become part of the problem. To say or do nothing gives permission for unjust actions to continue.

I (we) want to work towards the solution!!!!

The article also told us that we must listen and learn from each other. Over the years, the United Methodist Women have provided a number of methods and other tools to help us develop better listening and learning skills. Also, these tools have (or can) help us learn how to start dialogue with each other. As leaders, please review and put into practice the information that is given to us from our national United Methodist Women and encourage our District and Local UMW unit to do the same. My article was written in 2016, and in 2021, we as United Methodist Women know that our work is far from being done and racism is unfortunately still alive and doing well everywhere. Let us always share our stories, emotions and concerns when we are speaking out for what we know is "right" or "wrong" when it comes to loving our neighbors as we love ourselves.

We are all very busy people, however, please take the time to read the United Methodist Women Racial Justice Charter News articles regularly; possibly watch a Faith Talk; watch a movie or documentary related to some of our Racial Justice issues; become familiar with the United Methodist Women Racial Justice website; use the "Tools for Leaders: Resources for Racial Justice" handbook; or just have an open, honest, and safe conversation with each other about your feelings concerning Racial Justice issues. More importantly, remember to stay in connection with each other and be a part of that "Faith, Hope and Love in Action" that we work towards through United Methodist Women.

Marchelle "Micki" Phelps, President

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North Central Jurisdiction UMW

Joy in Working Together

After attending my own UMW Conference Annual Gathering, it was good to see the new incoming officers and also to see the recognition of those whose terms are now complete. Sometimes there is a reluctance to begin a new office but there is such joy in working together toward helping women and children live a better life either near or far away.

Do you know of a woman who has had experience with UMW leadership on the district and conference levels who would appreciate being lifted up for consideration of a position on the 2024 North Central Jurisdiction team? Or would you like to submit your own name? This newsletter has two forms for either submitting your own name or someone else. Please give this some prayerful consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Elizabeth Everett, Chair,
Committee on Nominations*



Collaboration Between Conferences: Iowa & West Ohio

Over the last year, starting during Advent 2020, the Iowa and West Ohio conferences have been collaborating to enrich and nourish members in both conferences enlarging our “community of women” and “developing a creative supportive fellowship and expanding concepts of mission”. It started with an invitation from West Ohio for Iowa to join their virtual Advent study using the book “Women Rise Up”. The a small work group with members from both conferences met to think of other ways to collaborate. The Iowa Conference invited West Ohio to join their virtual Charter for Racial Justice Event on May 22, 2021 “Why Racial Justice” with Dr. Eddie Moore Jr. presentation “America is Changing: #Stay Woke”. The small group decided to do a joint event, created by both conferences next focusing on self-care. On November 13, 2021 the event “The Blessings of Play” will occur. There will be worship, 4 Breakouts of playfulness/self-care and creative supportive fellowship amongst the 2 conferences. The collaboration that started with a simple invitation has been a blessing to all.

*Gladys Alvarez, President
Iowa Conference UMW*

A Season of Change

The season of Fall is upon us. Quickly, we must convert our lives to accommodate the weather. I am thankful we have a variety of seasons. We barely get comfortable with a season, and another change comes surging through. Aesthetically we prepare ourselves, our homes, our family and our church by changing the wreath on the front door, decorated with motif of seasonal bounty. Attach the wreath securely so the wind does not blow it away! A wreath displayed represents ‘Welcome’, and never-ending love for all ~ friends and strangers. We are in a constant season of change, as there is a time and season for everything. We must prepare. As we are learning from United Methodist Women ‘Faith Talks’, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins.

The important thing is to prepare yourself first, and that leads us to ‘soul care’. If we do not properly care for ourselves, how can we care for another? A phrase that jumped out to me in a recent ‘Faith Talks’ – ‘Put on your own oxygen mask first’. Think about that. We really do need to take care of ourselves first. So many of us are preparing for 2022 Assembly. TURN IT UP! It gets more exciting every day, but we need to prepare. The North Central Jurisdiction is proud to offer two scholarships per conference within our jurisdiction. For those conferences that have not responded yet, there is still time. The early registration deadline is November 30; and the scholarships are based on the cost of that timeframe. If your conference chooses an applicant after that deadline, that is ok; however, the scholarship is for the early registration amount and the applicant [or conference] would pay the difference. Also, the scholarship is good for a virtual registration. Oh God, Let us all embrace change, enjoy the season of change and take care of ourselves. Be with us as we continue our journey of ministry for You. Amen.

Sylvia S. Kempton, Treasurer

**Registration is OPEN
UMW Assembly**



**May 20-22, 2022
Orlando, Florida**

Michigan: A Time for Hope

Dear UMW Sisters in the NCJ:

Greetings from the Michigan Conference UMW! I recently read an article in a science journal that was titled "People's Heartbeats Synchronize When They're Captivated by the Same Story". This study researched what happens in our bodies when we pay attention to stories and it appears our hearts beat in unison, even if we are miles away from each other. Stories, more than facts and data, engage us, make us pay attention, and think about what actions come next.

This is what happens with us as United Methodist Women. We are a community of women listening to the same stories - in our Mission u studies, in our FaithTalks podcast, in our **response** magazine or at Assembly 2022. In listening to these same stories our heartbeats - our love - synchronizes and together we put that love into action! Our role, as leaders in our Districts and Conferences, is to find ways to connect more women (not just United Methodist Women anymore) to these stories.

Once again, in October 2021, the Michigan Conference UMW held a virtual Conference Annual Celebration at a time we had so very much hoped to be together in person.

We find comfort in these words from Jeremiah 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." So, we have hope as we plan and look forward to 2022! We have hope that we will find ways to re-connect with our established members AND connect with new members in 2022. We have hope that we will find encouragement in the exciting new re-branding initiatives being planned by our National Office in 2022. We have hope that we will find inspiration at Assembly 2022 as we Turn it Up! We have hope that we will find opportunities to re-engage our members at spiritual growth events, Mission u and District and Conference Annual Meetings in 2022. Our hopes are our prayers, and we are including all of you in those prayers too.
Blessings,

**Julia Paradine-Rice, President
Michigan Conference UMW**



Joy Harjo-American Poet Laureate

With the celebration of Indigenous People's Day on October 11, 2021 and with Thanksgiving coming up on November 25, 2021, let's show love, give thanks and prayer to our Native American Sisters and Brothers.

The attached information is from Jeanette Harris. Jeanette is the 2021 President of the Greater Detroit District UMW, UMW Michigan Conference. Jeanette is introducing Joy Harjo. The current Poet Laureate is a Native American.

A Poet Laureate is a poet officially appointed by a government or conferring institution, typically expected to compose poems for special events and occasions.

Rev. Sue Pethoud, Church and Community Relations Liaison, Cass Community Social Services, Detroit MI, sent me a link of Native American poems and prayers to share in our newsletter. See the link below:

<https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML/Wisdom/poemsidx.html>

Please see the summary about Joy Harjo after President Micki reviewed her work on the internet.

Joy Harjo is a multi-talented individual. She is an American poet, musician, playwright, and author. In 2019, Joy Harjo was named the United States Poet Laureate and is the first Native American to be so appointed and the second United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to serve three terms. Joy Harjo has won a number of awards and has achieved many accomplishments during her career and in 2021 was recently inducted in the National Women's Hall of Fame. You can read more about Joy Harjo and her work on the internet.

Always Enough: Dakotas

Greetings from the Dakotas!! Our Conference prepares a UMW Devotional Guide every year for units to use in their local organizations. This is a devotional that I submitted for our 2013 Guide.

November 2013 Always Enough

Scripture: Mark 6:30-44 Feeding of the Five Thousand

Reflection: It's easy to forget to be grateful, to let daily worries distract from the abundance that is ours. Humans often focus on what is lacking. Mortgage payments, medical bills, troubles with children, looming deadlines, broken washing machines, migraines, or even a burnt casserole—all seem to interfere with our appreciation for blessings received. These short-term inconveniences will pass, but God's blessings and love continue to shower down on us!

Today when we look at our possessions and our problems, we usually zero in on the down side of a situation, and then we try to solve it. Even though we may have most of what we need in order to meet a goal, or are mostly pleased with a project, that's not what we see. We ignore the "most" and focus on the "little bit" that still needs fixing. Our dissatisfaction and wants loom larger to us than all that God has already provided. We grow discontented with our human imperfections.

Jesus did not look at his circumstances this way, and he did not teach his disciples to do so either. He asked, "How many loaves do you have?" He knew what he had been given (v 38), and he knew that God had promised to supply all needs. When 5000 men and their families needed feeding, Jesus counted the handful of loaves and fishes—and gave thanks! He took what was at hand and looked to heaven (v 40). Instead of focusing on the hungry people for whom there was a short supply of food, Jesus gave thanks for what they had (v 41)! It wasn't much, but it was what God had provided.

And God never falls short in meeting a need.

Do we miss out on God's abundant supply because we focus so much on the need and so little on what He has already given? Jesus gave us a clear example. He did not plead or how little food there was. No, instead he gave thanks for what was there!! The abundance is clear in verse 42: "They all ate and were satisfied."

May we remember to give thanks for everything we are blessed with! When you wake in the morning and before you fall asleep at night, make praise and thanksgiving your first and last thoughts. For whatever your current circumstances are, God has given each of us the gift of abundant life in the present and the promise of life everlasting in the future.

Prayer: Provider and Sustainer, I am rich in love and comforts. My life is full to the brim. I praise and thank you for all you have given to me. Open my heart so that I will share my many blessings with others. May I serve you until all have eaten and are satisfied. Amen.

**Marsha Timm, President
Dakotas Conference UMW**



North Central Jurisdiction

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North Central Jurisdiction *News, Connections & Joys*

News:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring **good news** to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." *Luke 4:18-19 NRSV*

Go, Tell It On the Mountain *UMH #251*

Connections:

United Methodist Women ..."Shall be a **community of women** whose PURPOSE is to know God..."

"In prayer, there is a connection between what God does and what you do."
Matthew 6:14 "The Message"

Bind Us Together *The Faith We Sing #2226*

Joys:

"**Make a joyful noise** to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness, come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord is God, it is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the Lord is good, his steadfast love endures forever and his faithfulness to all generations."
Psalms 100 NRSV

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee *UMH #89*

Flexible & Adaptable in Minnesota

The Minnesota Conference began 2021 with a bang as we were awarded a \$4200 Just Energy for All grant. We collaborated with Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light to create opportunities for United Methodist Women and their congregations to learn how to write and tell their Climate Story. It was an easy step from there as they connected with local legislators to share those stories. The grant was also utilized in education surrounding the Enbridge Line 3/Tar Sands pipeline providing space for discussion from all viewpoints. A few joined 400 plus people of all faith walks in a prayer circle at the Mississippi River headwaters and followed Indigenous Water Protectors in a peaceful protest opposing Line 3. You can view a little of the story at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJtQhpydna8> (Video was produced with a portion of the grant*)

Flexible and Adaptable! Those are the characteristics that are becoming a part of Minnesota's strengths. 2020 found us scratching our heads and wondering how in the world were we going to host our Annual Gathering, and we found a way. 2021 found us planning for an in-person event. With everything in place we made the decision to go virtual-No problem! Our Virtual Annual Gathering, Faith, Hope, and Love in Action: God's Call to Us, included Bishop David Bard with an inspiring message, a full business meeting and Dani Pieratos from Harvest Nation speaking about their indoor aeroponic CSA farm, concluding the day with Leadership Training. Flexible, Adaptable and Efficient!

New wineskins have been a theme that has permeated our thoughts beginning at an August retreat and extending through our Annual Gathering and Leadership Development Retreat.

We have considered much about lessons we have learned this past 18 months and things that maybe we can let go of. The Minnesota United Methodist Women are excited about 2022 and the possibilities that lie in wait as we continue to turn Faith, Hope and Love into Action on behalf of Women, Children and Youth! See you at Assembly!

*Cindy Saufferer, President
Minnesota Conference UMW*

*You can find the video on YouTube by searching Treaty People Gathering to Stop Line 3, June 2021.

Get to Know Great Rivers Conference

Greetings to my UMW sisters from the Illinois Great Rivers UMW Conference.

Our conference extends from just south of Interstate 80 in Illinois to the southern tip of the state. We are currently divided into ten districts. Since we now have only 8 District Superintendents covering those 10 districts, we are anticipating change. The change has not been expressed by the UMC conference leadership as yet.

We are blessed with two National Mission Institutions in our conference. Cunningham Children's Home in Urbana consists of an educational building, a spiritual growth chapel and on campus housing for at risk youth. We also provide counseling services off campus. Their main fund raiser was hybrid this year. Next year please join us for their Festival of Quilts. You will need to check their website as a date has not been announced yet. Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House in located in East St Louis, provides daycare for young and old, and preschool. They also provide Food Pantry, Meals on Wheels and after school programs.

We have struggled with Covid 19 restrictions and lost members due to Covid as well as the usual reasons. We have lost local units due to aging out of members and struggles with internet connections. I was told this week we could possibly have our most southern district go in active because of lack of members willing to be district officers.

Our conference has also had some good news to share. We were able to do our Spiritual Growth Retread in February 2021 on line with almost twice the number of attendees than we usually have in person. Our Personal Growth studies were done about Just Energy and led by our Vice President either in person or virtual in all districts. Annual Celebration for us is coming up on October 2nd , 2021 and it will also be virtual. It was reported to me that we have finally got a full slate of UMW Conference officers.

A little bit about myself. This has been my first year as conference president. I was district president four years before that and had served on district UMW as Vice President for two years, treasurer for three years and Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood Representative for three years. I have three grown

children and five grandchildren. My husband and I are active in our local church and like to travel in our 10 year old motorhome.

God Bless you and break your heart for what breaks His.

**Susan Connor, President
Illinois Great Rivers Conference UMW**



Calling All Quilters & Knitters

Greetings, everyone,

I hope you can tell me what happened to August and September. We are already seeing Thanksgiving and Christmas advertising. Our NCJ team is busy planning for Assembly and for our 2024 Celebration!

I noticed some updates on our scholarship program and wanted to remind everyone to reach out to our Native American sisters. My Conference had a couple for scholarships last Assembly. I am sure there are women in all our groups, that would love to attend Assembly, It's our way of staying "Knitted Together"

I am looking for Quilters and people who love to knit, with nine states. I am excited to see who is available, I am working on a way to showcase our states, especially the shape and size. I will explain more about it after I hear from you. We need display ideas for both Assembly and our 2024 celebration. I would love to see all nine state displayed in unique ways.

While reading different Conference newsletters, I was inspired by several scriptures I read. I know that all the Jurisdictions have to vote on a scripture for the 2024 event, I would like to hear from each of our Conferences. Our team will keep you updated on all plans as they become final, I am so excited. I have been reading your newsletters, they are fantastic, and very helpful, in keeping us connected.

"Are you registered for Assembly?"

Warm regards,
Pat Bostic, Vice President

North Central Jurisdiction

2021-2024 Leadership Team

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**Stay tuned for updates on our North Central Jurisdiction
Quadrennial Event to be held in 2024!**



Recommendation to the NCJ Committee on Nominations

Date _____

I recommend: (please print)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: Home _____ Cell _____

E-Mail _____

Age: ___20's ___30's ___40's ___50's ___60's ___70's ___80's+

Race/Ethnicity _____ Languages Spoken _____

Employed: ___Yes ___No

Why this person should be considered (use back side, if needed):

Positions I would recommend this person for:

Office of _____

And/or _____

References:

1. Name _____ Phone/e-mail _____

2. Name _____ Phone/e-mail _____

Person submitting this information:

Signed (your name) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Conference _____

Please return to: Elizabeth Everitt, Chair of Nominations, NCJurisdiction
4460 Jack Pine Trail North
Lake Elmo MN 55042
651-260-5347

Thank you and God Bless You!

United Methodist Women
North Central Jurisdiction
Committee on Nominations
<https://www.umwncj.org>



Tell me more...I may be interested!

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Telephone: Home _____ **Cell** _____

E-Mail _____

Conference _____

My ethnicity/race (to help us be as inclusive as possible) _____

My Experience in United Methodist Women:

What I might be interested in doing _____

Please return this form to a NCJ CON Team member.

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Thank you and God bless you!

**United Methodist Women
North Central Jurisdiction
Committee on Nominations
<https://www.umwncj.org>**