

# The V.O.I.C.E.

Valuable Organizational Information Connecting Everyone

The Official Newsletter of the Michigan Conference United Women in Faith

## A Word From Our President

I have recently been spending some time reviewing a History of United Methodist Community House (UMCH) that was written by Patsy Coffman, West Michigan Conference UMW President 2001-2004. This history chronicles the activities of Methodist Women who felt called to put their faith into action for their immigrant neighbors in Grand Rapids, Michigan beginning in September 1902. Through the decades the ministries changed as the needs of the community changed, beginning with kindergarten classes for girls, and bible study, citizenship, sewing and cooking classes for women, to opening the first childcare center in the city of Grand Rapids in 1936, and to one of the few nationally accredited child development centers in Grand Rapids in 2023.

The story through the years is one of faith, love, steadfastness, perseverance and flexibility! At one point in the 1940's the building they were using was condemned, but they didn't throw up their hands and declare the task impossible. They did raise funds, repair and improve the facility and continue on their mission. In the 1960's they even collected trading stamps (some of you may remember those) to purchase a station wagon that

allowed their girls choir known as the Community Singers to travel and perform throughout the area.

In Hebrews when Paul

instructs us to "run with perseverance the race marked out for us", it is not a sprint, but a marathon! That is the race that United Women in Faith and United Methodist Community House

have been running together for over 120 years, and we aren't done yet. Soon UMCH will be breaking ground on a major, visionary, expansion project. It is big, exciting, a bit scary, and much needed in their community. It will include affordable housing units for seniors, even more child development and childcare space for 0-4-year-olds, a fresh market and more. And as we have been doing for 120+ years, our sisterhood of faith will continue to put our faith into action for United Methodist Community House!

If you would like a program on UMCH at your unit or church, please let me know.

Blessings,

*Julia Paradine-Rice*, President

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

**Hebrews 12:1b**  
**And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.**

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June 2023

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

## United Methodist Community House Update



When a group of United Methodist Women founded the United Methodist Community House in 1902, they envisioned a place where everyone— regardless of age, race, or income— would find community. That at UMCH, everyone would find a place to belong.

The UMW legacy of “showing up and getting things done” has been carried on for more than a century, and it is who we are today.

For generations, UMCH has been a place where so many have found community and belonging. But as the needs of our community grow, we know we can— and must—do more.

That’s why we have launched the *Creating a Place to Belong* campaign, a three-year plan to ensure that more children can thrive, more families can work, and more seniors can be healthy in mind, body, and spirit.

In the spirit of our shared legacy, we are excited to invite you to join the **1902 Society**, a special opportunity just for United Women in Faith, by making a gift to this historic campaign.

**You can learn more about the 1902 Society, the *Creating a Place to Belong Campaign*, and how you can get involved by visiting [umchousegr.org/faith](http://umchousegr.org/faith).**

This campaign has already captured the hearts and minds of lawmakers, foundations,

corporations, and individual donors. It is truly moving to see how this campaign is inspiring action toward a common goal. As our longest-standing partners, we hope you will join us by learning about the campaign and considering a gift.

Thank you for your unwavering support over the years. We are endlessly grateful for each and every one of you.  
In partnership,



**Eric J. Williams**  
UMCH Co CEO



**Carla Moore**  
UMCH Co CEO

and the UMCH team

P.S. You likely recently received a letter about the *Creating a Place to Belong* campaign and 1902 Society from conference president Julia Paradine-Rice in your email or mailbox. If you missed it or misplaced it, you can find all the materials at



## SAVE THE DATE!

5th Conference Annual Celebration  
October 28, 2023

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

Registration starts @ 8:30 am

Keynote speaker: Bishop Bard

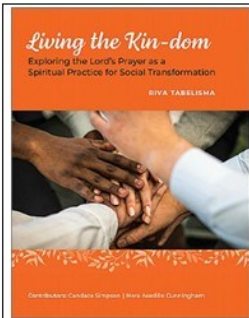
**Celebrate our accomplishments!**



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

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

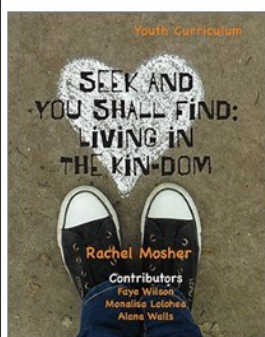
In-Gathering will benefit Community Care Network in Mt Peasant. You may bring infant (not toddler) formula, baby food, baby care items, diapers sizes 4 & 5, personal hygiene items.



**ADULT STUDY**  
*Living the Kin-dom* by Riva Tabelisma

**\$75 until June 15**  
**\$85 After June 15**  
**\$40 ZOOM**

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



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

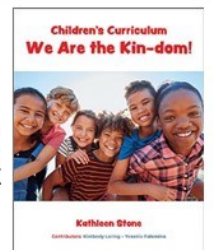
The 2023 youth curriculum leads youth through eight one-hour sessions that teach participants to find the kin-dom in the world around them, how to live what they have learned, and how to share the Good News about the kin-dom with others.



**CHILDREN'S STUDY**  
*We Are the Kin-dom!* By Kathleen Stone

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

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



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

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

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



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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Church: \_\_\_\_\_  
 District: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Youth/Children (name and age): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Check all that apply:*

**Information:**

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

**Special needs:**

- Sign language interpreters  
 Dietary requirements (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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



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

## Why YOU Should Attend Mission u:

- **Our Mission u study leaders are exceptional!**
  - ◊ The Rev. Audra Hudson will be teaching the adult study. She serves the Wesley Foundation at Central Michigan University as their Director.
  - ◊ The Rev. Tiffany Newsom is back this year, teaching the youth. She serves at Laingsburg UMC.
  - ◊ The Rev. Ronda Libbett will be teaching the children. She serves at St. Luke AME Zion Church in Grand Rapids.
- **Mission u will be hybrid**-which means you can choose to come in person or attend online.
- The **Ingathering** will go to Community Compassion Network in Mt. Pleasant. Let's replenish their baby pantry with the following:
  - formula, any kind except toddler, baby food, baby care items like wash, lotion, shampoo, sippy cups, bottle brushes and bottles, diapers size 4 & 5, personal hygiene items.
- **Lodging** is on your own but we have reserved a block of rooms at a great price of only \$119 plus taxes for up to 4 people. Register early and book your hotel early to get the best price.
- **Books, books, books!** We will have Reading Program books for sale. If that doesn't satisfy your book hunger we will also have a book sharing table. Bring books you want to get rid of and for a small donation take the ones you want to read. Money raised will go to our Pledge to Mission.
- **Silent Auction!** Bring donations for a silent auction, and bid on items you want!

## Program Resources - Reading Program

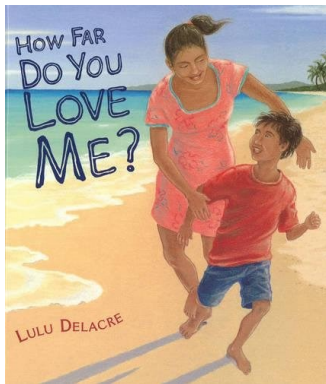
John Wesley had a passion for reading and he did so mostly on horseback with books propped on the pommel of his saddle and thus he consumed thousands of books as he travelled 50 to 90 miles a day.

Although most of us no longer travel on horseback and we certainly don't recommend that you read a book while driving, I do recommend that you keep a book handy to be read during any waiting time. While waiting in the car for children, while waiting at the doctor's office or any other place

where there is time that would otherwise be wasted is a good time to read a book. I try to always have a book handy.

I hope you are making progress in reading for the reading program. If you struggle with a full-length

book, then check out the children's books. There are children's books in every category. Let me recommend a couple. **How Far Do You Love Me?** is an Education for Mission book. It actually is a game that you can play with your kids or



grandkids. **Vail's Tales** is a Nurturing for Community book. It has four stories written by a nine year old girl before her death. Both are delightful books with wonderful art and meaningful stories for kids as well as adults.

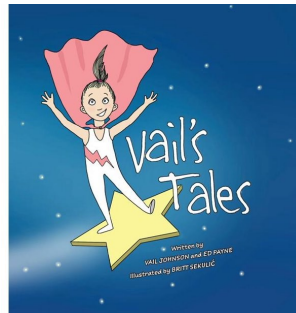
Most recently I finished **Four Winds**. This book takes place in the Texas dustbowl during the depression. The main character moved to California in hopes of finding a more prosperous future for her two children. This is an excellent book about the strength of a woman and raising a strong daughter. Life was not always good and happy, but this woman worked hard and was determined to provide a better future for her children.

If you have not already done so, get your Reading Program report for 2022 turned into your district program resources coordinator. The district provides certificates to people who have completed the program, usually at the annual celebration.

I look forward to meeting you at Mission u in July and will be there with books available to purchase. Don't hesitate to call me if you have questions about the reading program.

*Ruth Sutton*

Secretary of Program Resources  
(989) 708-9968 [suttonr1@charter.net](mailto:suttonr1@charter.net)



## Social Action

**Action Alert – Urging Congresspersons to pass Historic Climate Investments**

**TEXT UWF Climate to 52886**

<https://p2a.co/fpd9ujd>

**Action Alert - Stop School Pushout!**

Join United Women in Faith members and friends in urging Congress to pass The Ending PUSHOUT Act of 2023 (H.R. 2690), a federal bill that would support schools in addressing discriminatory and punitive discipline policies that criminalize and push Black girls and other girls of color out of school.

<https://p2a.co/5rHY0nq>

### **RACIAL JUSTICE**

Please take action to support the call for Justice to the Palestinians and this resolution.

<https://cryforhope.org>

Many thanks to those who supported Advocacy Day.

*Jocelyn Davis*

Social Action Coordinator  
[missydavis32@gmail.com](mailto:missydavis32@gmail.com)  
(810) 694-6266

## Soul Care Retreat is Coming to Michigan

In response to a United Women in Faith National Office Request for Proposals, Pat Bostic, Vice President, North Central Jurisdiction, and I provided an application for a Soul Care Retreat. We were awarded a grant for a Soul Care Retreat which would be scheduled and held before June 30. We were given online training and access to the draft Soul Care Handbook. Well, two surgeries and a major ice storm left us unable to meet the deadline. But, as we are tenacious women of faith, we labored on. A Soul Care Retreat is now scheduled for Saturday, August 6 at the Clarenceville United Methodist Church in Livonia Michigan.



So, what is Soul Care? Soul Care nurtures your mind, body and spirit while deepening your faith through spiritual practice and creating or strengthening the bonds of sisterhood. As active women of faith, most of us are more like Martha than Mary in the Luke 10:38-42 story. We can slow down,

In addition to meeting those objectives, it is

hoped that the Soul Care Retreat we are planning will introduce younger women to the purpose of the United Women of Faith. It is hoped that we can connect a new generation of women to Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship and education so that this new

cohort of women will make an impact locally and globally.

If you are interested in helping in the conduct of this Soul Care Retreat or if you have names of women who might benefit from a time of spirit enrichment which might lead to a connection with the United Women in Faith, please let me know. Yes, I have heard from units that their members are getting older and feel tired. So, are going to do a “new thing” through this Soul Care Retreat and bring in new women who will bring revitalized energy to United Women in Faith.

*Jeanette Harris*, President,  
Greater Detroit District  
Jharris48@yahoo.com  
248 752-7147



## Mission u for Membership Growth

What is Mission u? Is it a retreat, a conference, or a form of Bible camp? I would say YES—a mix of all of the above. It is a get away to network with other women and grow in knowledge though a study. District team members consider bringing a roommate from a local Unit. You need to experience this event just once to know what it will do for you and your Unit and district team membership.

*Cindy Thiele*

Membership Nurture and Outreach  
cindathiele@gmail.com  
(269) 673-4514

**ATTENTION** The 2022 National Unit survey is open online. This data collection gives a snapshot of the growth and impactful work that members, local and virtual groups are engaged in throughout the year.

**The Unit Survey  
deadline is August  
30th, fill it out now,  
while you are  
thinking about it!**

Questions focus on membership growth, mission education, events and social action. Conference and District officers please fill out the survey so that you will be able to inform and encourage Unit

presidents to complete the survey. The Michigan Conference Link is:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/>

## Messages from District Presidents

As we write this, Central Bay District have just had our Spiritual Life Retreat at the Springs on April 28 & 29, 2023. The Speaker was Faith Fowler, she was wonderful as always. We had a total of 60 attendees (49 who stayed overnight and 11 who commuted). Our District Annual Celebration and ELT will be held at Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church on October 7, 2023.

The Nomination Team and all the Leadership Team Members are working very hard to fill the openings on the Team. We still have openings for Vice President, Social Action, Membership Nurture and Outreach and several places on the Nomination committee. Please Prayerfully consider joining The Central Bay District UWF Leadership Team. **WE NEED YOU NOW.**

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

*Caroline Diaz*

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

*Doris Simons*

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

The Northern Skies UWF held our Celebration on May 2, just as a giant snowstorm (24 inches) had hit the Northern UP. It affected our numbers but not our enthusiasm for celebrating all that we have done for women, children and youth in the name of Jesus. Our theme, Camping for Christ, determined our table decorations, lunch, offering, music, and ingathering as they all centered around our district camp, Camp Michigamme. A pickup load of donations was collected as well as \$1300 for Camp!

Our speaker, Janeve Hembold, was so empowering as she spoke about her life experience, From Buddhist to Christian. She's from Portage, MI. I encourage other districts to ask Janeve to speak at your district events!

*Patti Steinberg*

President, Northern Sky District  
pattisteinberg@gmail.com (906) 367-2128



**Janeve Hembold**

This little light of mine! I'm gonna let... You can finish this, right? And – heh, heh – I'm pretty sure this forever ago little song will be stuck in your head for the rest of the day – maybe even including the hand motions! We all have lights – big, little, steady, flickering, reddish, bluish, yellowish. Just a little light can break through darkness. Little lights joined together can eliminate darkness. Jesus said "I am the light of the world." in John 8:12. Claim your light in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ! Develop your light through United Women in Faith! Be someone's light! Let others see your light! Be a source of inspiration, encouragement, guidance, grace, and hope. Be the smile someone needs. You never know what the impact of a smile might be.

Sometimes lights get stomped on or blown out. That happened to Jesus, too. When our light goes out, lean in and lean on Jesus. We can't pick ourselves up again by ourselves. Jesus knows and cares! People tried to extinguish Jesus' light, but look what happened! We know the end of the story! Bring your light with you to your next UWF event and join with others. Lots of lights together – wow – what a difference!

**Receive the light! Claim the light! Be the light!**

NWD's Spiritual Growth Retreat at Frankfort UMC was led by Debbie Highway April 15. The theme was "Because We're Family" and centered around Ruth and Naomi. Her husband Brian helped with music. It was

our first in-person/ZOOM event! Nine women attended who wouldn't have been able to without ZOOM because of travel distance and time.

Power of Bold Day is (or will have been, by the time you read this) May 20. Our first speaker, Alline Beutler from Justice for Our Neighbors, will speak on providing a welcoming presence for immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Northern Michigan. The second speaker, Ashley Halladay-Schmandt, will speak on ending youth/young adult homelessness using a systems change approach. These are timely topics in today's world. (Get your little light out! Wave it big! Let it shine!)

Please join us for our Fifth Annual Celebration Oct. 7 at Mancelona UMC. The speaker will be Tara DeGroot and her topic will be homelessness. More information will be in our newsletter, "Catch a Wave," on Facebook, and on our UWF website.

We sincerely thank our speakers, musicians, and host churches: Frankfort, Traverse City Central, & Mancelona.

It has been a wonderful experience serving with the NWD officers – they're the best! Their lights shine brightly!

*Julia Hulka*, President, Northern Waters District

jahulka49@gmail.com  
(989) 348-1992, c (989) 860-8189

### Conference Meeting Dates

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

Leadership Development - Holt UMC  
October 27, 2023

Conference Annual - Holt UMC  
October 28, 2023

Jurisdiction- Indianapolis  
May 30-June 2 2024

Assembly- Indianapolis  
2026

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Published three times a year: February, May and August

Send submissions by the 10th of the previous month to  
Sally Messner at [sallymessner@yahoo.com](mailto:sallymessner@yahoo.com)

## Charter for Racial Justice

The work of Racial Justice is continual. Seeking understanding of complex systemic racial inequity is a lifetime path. In a time when we would have thought racial inequity would not be an issue, it seems to be getting worse. Examining the behavior in our communities that perpetuates injustice is a crucial part of our living into our faith.



Our call and commitment as United Women in Faith through our Charter for Racial Justice, is to continue that work until justice is served.

Read the Charter for Racial Justice and affirm what YOU believe. Commit to being an active catalyst for change and making racial equity a reality.

Really listen to the voices and stories of our siblings as they share the painful harm racial injustice has caused them.

For resources go to :  
<https://uwfaith.org/?s=Racial+Justice+Opportunities>

Be the change.

*Nichea VerVeer Gay*

National Charter for Racial Justice Support Team

## Messages From District Presidents

Greetings from the Midwest District soon to be Western Waters District. We will be made up of the 2 counties on the westside of the state starting at Ottawa and Kent Counties and going north to Traverse City. We will be a long and narrow district. Midwest has not done zoom or live meetings but I see this in our near future.

Our district annual meeting is scheduled for Saturday, September 16 at Hart UMC in Hart MI. We are planning a brunch and celebrating the old and new districts.

*Jean Sherman*

Midwest District President  
[sherdairy1@gmail.com](mailto:sherdairy1@gmail.com)

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

