

The V.O.I.C.E.

Valuable Organizational Information Connecting Everyone

The Official Newsletter of the Michigan Conference United Methodist Women

Y M I A U M W

Do you get it? Why am I a UMW! When friends and acquaintances ask me why I am involved in UMW, I never seem to have a very well-thought-out answer. So, I sat down and considered this question seriously and it comes down to these 4 reasons – (not quite a 30 second elevator pitch but I can talk fast!):

1) I was invited. When we moved to Alma in 2003, one of the first people I met in the Alma UMC was Linda Darrow. She was very friendly and welcoming and invited me to an Alma UMW meeting. Then she invited me to be part of the local leadership team, then the district leadership team, and well, you get the picture. I was invited, included and made to feel welcome.

2) I love the fellowship. When we recite our Purpose, the part that says “develop a creative, supportive fellowship” is absolutely true! In our local units, throughout the District and Conference, and even at National events you feel like you are truly a part of a “fellowship”. We laugh together, cry together, pray for each other, celebrate with each other, sing together in many languages and even dance. These are my **sisters** in Christ!

3) I trust and believe in the mission.

For more than 150 years, United Methodist Women have been organized for mission and have worked in the name of Jesus Christ to change unjust systems to improve the lives of women, children and youth. We have never wavered from this mission. I believe I can give my pledge money to United Methodist Women, and I can trust they will use those monies responsibly to support this mission work.

4) My mother told me to. This gets to the heart of it. My mother is a wise woman and she told me several years ago, “there will be many good organizations that you can contribute your time and money to, but none of them will have the impact on you and others that UMW will.” Mom, I am still listening!

So, Y R U A U M W? We would love to hear your response in a sentence, paragraph or page! E-mail it to michiganumw@gmail.com. Let’s keep telling our story. UMW is not just another social women’s group...we are a movement!

Blessings,

Julia Paradine-Rice, President

Michigan Conference UMW
Jparadinerice@gmail.com
(989) 576-0675

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United Methodist Women: Faith • Hope • Love in Action

We are women with a Purpose!

The organized unit of the United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose PURPOSE is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

United Methodist Community House Annual Community Impact Report

Think for a moment about a challenge you weren't sure you could overcome. Maybe what comes to mind is something like public speaking or a difficult project. Perhaps it's something more profound, like a health crisis or losing a job. No matter what, we bet you can remember that groundless feeling when you realized what was ahead of you, and the resolve you felt as you tackled the situation head-on.

And while you might not feel grateful for the challenge itself, you probably wouldn't trade the lessons you learned or the strength you gained for anything.

Maybe, like us, the challenge that came to mind was a cold March day in 2020 when you realized life was about to look different than you ever imagined. When the shelter in place order began and we closed the doors to our facility, we weren't sure what to expect. But we never lost sight of what was most important: being there for our clients.

With faith and hope, we adapted. And with your support, we provided remote services to children, families, youth, and seniors throughout the entire closure.

We provided emergency supplies and virtual support to our child development center member families. We hosted virtual after-school activities and academic assistance to students in the Grand Rapids Public Schools 21st Century program. And we made sure our older adult clients had meal delivery, wellness visits, safe transportation, and more.

We learned that with our partners—all of you—we can be innovative and nimble. We can turn challenge into opportunity. We can envision a future that is better than the “normal” we left behind—and together, we can bring that future to life.

For now, our programs are a hybrid of virtual and in-person programming. We've limited childcare and older adult group programs to about

50% of previous numbers to allow for social distancing, and after school youth programs are a mix of virtual and in-person. We're continuing to do as much as we can to provide remote support for those who can't be physically with us.

We're excited to get back to full capacity, but we have no plans to get back to “normal.” This year is all about growth and transformation at UMCH. We're introducing new pilot initiatives in our child development center like family engagement and drop-in care, we've launched a new Fresh Market, and we're building new partnerships to expand our health and wellness support for older adults.

There is a lot to look forward to—and we're just getting started. Thank you for being our partners in transformation!



Eric J. Williams
Chief Executive Officer



Carla Moore
Chief Operating Officer

Another Way to Grow With Us

**Calling all green thumbs and flower lovers!
We need your help!**

Some areas around our office need sprucing up for spring and summer. Can you donate flower flats and planting time to make United Methodist Community House an even more beautiful place to be?

Let us know! Contact Carla Moore, Chief Operations Officer, at 616-452-3226 or cmoore@umchousegr.org.



United Methodist
Community House

Save the Dates

Hear ye Hear ye:
Plans are underway for the 3rd Annual UMW Michigan Conference Celebration.

Date: October 23rd, 2021.

Place: Westwood UMC, Kalamazoo

Speaker: Emily Jones, Executive for Racial Justice
Counterpart Leadership training will be done Friday night along with a program on the Charter for Racial Justice.

We are planning an in-person event, but will be ready to change as needed. Westwood has the ability to live-stream so we are looking into using that. Save the date and join us.



TURN IT UP! for spiritual healing and renewal

TURN IT UP! for rebirth in a new time

TURN IT UP! for women leaders

TURN IT UP! for justice for women, children and youth

Early registration - \$330 - Sept 1 – Nov 30, 2021



Membership Nurture and Outreach

“And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If she does the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined.” Mark 2:22. This was the text at the leadership training last week. United Methodist Women are looking at *new branding* and *new events*. It seems that many young women and others are of the myth that United Methodist Women is a group of old ladies sitting around drinking tea and reading a few Bible verses. Let's show them who we are.

Have you attended a climate Justice webinar? I have zoomed in on live sessions and learned so much. Some of the women participated in Legislative Day where we

spoke with Senator Peter's office on electric vehicles and buses, charging stations, solar panels on schools and government buildings, and other pollution issues.

Have you tried the one-hour Faith Talks? These discussions with the National United Methodist Women board members open your eyes to social issues and the future of United Methodist Women. Keep your ears open to a new buzzword/event 'Soul Care'.

What social issues are you advocating for? In what ways are you growing? Look for big, exciting changes coming for our organization. Check out some of the Faith Talks and Climate Justice webinars on the National United Methodist Women

website. How about Soul Care?

Right now is the time to start advocating for Mission u! Place the information flier in your district newsletter. Have each Unit post the information on the church bulletin board and women's bathrooms. Plan a Unit gathering in your church to ZOOM in on the Mission u sessions. We are a community!

“United Methodist Women exist to make a difference”.
Harriett Olsen

Cindy Thiele

cindahthiele@gmail.com
(269) 673-4514

Program Resources

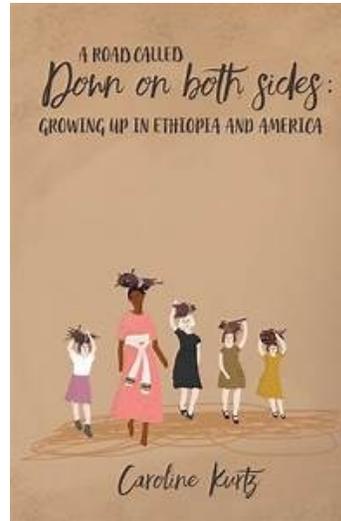
Oh, the places you will go! Who else gets excited finding out that the UMW reading program has added new books? (You should know that when I found out the reading list was for two years rather than one, as previous years, I complained that the list did not have enough books for an avid reader. I guess they were listening!) As soon as I found out that there were new books, I immediately went to my local library website to see which of them I would be able to borrow. For your information at least 55% of them are available at the library. Most libraries in Michigan are connected by MELCAT and make it possible to borrow books from other libraries, not just your local library. Some of these books are available as old-fashioned hard copy books, while others are available as e-books or as audio books. If you are not familiar with MELCAT, you should ask at your library if they use MELCAT.

The books on the reading list are quite varied. There are fiction books, how to books, spiritual development books and informative books about a variety of topics - even a children's book about how to read a map. To complete the reading program, you will need to read books from five areas: Nurturing for Community, Social Action, Spiritual Growth, Education for Mission and Leadership Development. As Dr. Seuss says, "The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you will go." In addition, the books ([Pushout](#), [Finding Peace in an Anxious World](#) and [Women United for Change: 150 years in Mission](#)) for Mission u also count on the Reading Program. The children's books also count in the reading program. If you really are not a reader, you can

watch movies that go along with the books on the list. You also can watch the Faith Talks podcasts.



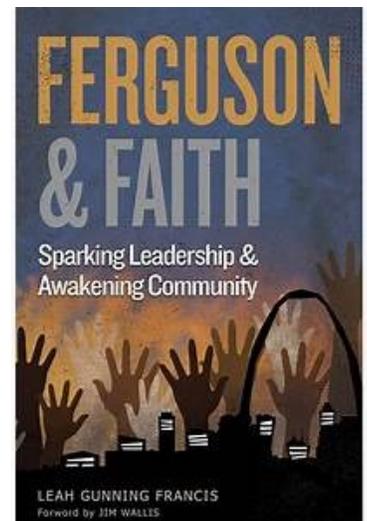
They can be found on the United Methodist Women website <http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks>. Three Faith Talks podcasts count as two books. Also don't forget to read RESPONSE as a part of



your reading program.

So where have I travelled as I have read? While reading the book *A Road Called Down on Both Sides*, by Caroline Kurtz, I traveled to Ethiopia and back to the United States and back to Ethiopia. This book was written by a woman who grew up as a child of missionaries in Ethiopia. She related her experiences and why

she and her family ended up back in Ethiopia. In another book, *Ferguson and Faith*, by Leah Gunning Francis, I travelled to Ferguson, MO as a clergy person related the experiences of local churches and clergy as they dealt with the death of Michael Brown at the hands of a white police officer. This is a book about an all too familiar story and how clergy can help in a city dealing with racism and police matters.



As secretary for Program Resources, I hope to keep you informed about things that are going on with the Reading Program. I will provide resources to make it easier for you to participate in the reading program. This week I had a request from a blind person for the titles that are available in the audio format. So, now I have a list of the books that are available in audio format. If you have a need or a question, please contact me. Enjoy the places you will go as you read!

Ruth Sutton

Secretary of Program Resources
suttonr1@charter.net
(989) 708-9968

Messages from District Presidents

Greetings from the Central Bay District United Methodist Women!

Doris and I have been working hard learning our new positions this year. It is amazing on how much detailing is involved.

Our District Team has been very busy the first quarter of this year. We have been conducting our District meetings by ZOOM with good attendance. Our Spiritual Brunch held by ZOOM was held on February 13 with wonderful reviews. Approximately 50 people in attendance. Our speaker was Fawn Glassford and she was wonderful.

As I write this we are getting ready for our Central Bay United Methodist Women Spiritual Life Retreat. It will be held Friday, April 23, and Saturday, April 24 by ZOOM. We are trying to keep our members connected even though we cannot meet in person safely at this time.

Our Annual Celebration and Training this year will be held at Mt. Pleasant First United Methodist Church on October 2. We are planning for an in person event. (Wouldn't that be nice?) If we are still not able to meet in person, it will be done by ZOOM.

We have many positions open on our District Team. If you are in the Central Bay District and interested in making a difference with a bunch of great women, we would like to have you join our team. Please contact our Nominations Chairman Rene Johnson at 989-631-2378 or renejohnson@charter.net, Doris Simons or myself for more information.

I have been reading some books on the United Methodist Women Reading List. There are now three movies that you can watch that count as books read. I have watched the movies "Just Mercy" and "The Hate U Give". They are both great. There are links on the 2021-2022 United Methodist Women Reading List to lead you to where you can find each movie: 2021 Reading Program Titles - UPDATED (unitedmethodistwomen.org). I have also been attending some of the Faith Talks which also count as books read. I highly recommend them. You can find the latest information on how this works in the

2021 Reading Program Catalog (unitedmethodistwomen.org).

I am very thankful that I was able to get both of my vaccinations already. I hope you have received yours also. I am still being very careful regarding exposure. We still have to wear masks, wash our hands and be careful where we go. All of us have been affected by Covid-19 in many different ways. We must believe that we will be able to see our friends and family soon. Meanwhile, we must keep in contact with each other.

I have been keeping busy lately walking with a church friend at a nearby College. I am still praying every day for things to get back to normal.

Blessings,

Caroline Diaz

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



Greetings from Central Bay District Co President Doris Simons. We had our April Leadership Team Meeting on April 10, 2021. We are still doing our meeting via Zoom, we hope to be able to have our Leadership Team Meeting in September in person. We are planning for the Central Bay District Annual Celebration on Saturday October 2 with the hope that we will be able to meet in person but will have plan B in place just in case that cannot happen.

Our District still has openings on the Leadership Team. The openings are for Secretary of Program Resources, Education & Interpretation, Social Action and Nominations. If you are in the District, and would like to join our team, please contact Rene Johnson, at (989) 631-2378 or renejohnson@charter.net

Doris Simons

Co-President, Central Bay District
dorissimons@att.net
(989) 781-1492, (248) 408-0797



The Midwest District is looking forward to the fall. We are working on our annual meeting in September. Then it will be our Day/Evening Apart event in November. Due to Mission U being a virtual event we may put more emphasis on events based on Mission U topics.

Take care and see you all soon.

Jean Sherman, Midwest District President - sherdairy1@gmail.com - (231) 519-2542

Messages from District Presidents

Fumble - bumble - fuddle - muddle - all descriptive of the past months. I don't know about you, but I may just be forced into a glass shattering scream if anyone even mentions ZOOM or mask or virus or social distancing in my presence! But we continue with great perseverance, and shall I say 'persistence!' And good things are a comin'! Here I am, the new Northern Waters District President with six new members on the Leadership Team, and I have never met four of them in person. How about that? But we share the same PURPOSE to engage in getting our work done and getting to know each other as best we can. Great hugs and laughter just ahead when we can finally meet in person!

We sponsored ZOOM Officer Training January 23. Our April 10 retreat, "Emboldened During an Epidemic", was presented by Ruth Jones in pre-recorded form using three parts: Bold By Design, Virtue During a Virus, & Be Ye Flexible. Thank you, Ruth! We are currently planning our Power of Bold

Day, a combination of social action & education and interpretation. Our speakers will be Toni Stanfield on "Before, During, & After Incarceration" & Wava Hofmann on Native American issues.

My current Reading Program book is Glory Happening: Finding the Divine in Everyday Places by Kaitlin B. Curtice (2020-NC). At first I was kinda not liking it, but then I got hooked: a child talking to plants, family traditions, a game of rummy, new & old friendships. Seeing God in everyday glory - the divine in the ordinary - beautiful words of wisdom from a young mother! Good read! Try it! See glory all around you in just about everything!

Julia Hulka

President
Northern Waters District
jahulka49@gmail.com
(989) 348-1992
c (989) 860-8189



I send warm greetings to you from the Mid-Michigan District. By the time you read my article, Mid-Michigan and Midwest Districts will have held our 2021 Spiritual Growth Retreat via Zoom. Ruth Jones, the Conference UMW's Spiritual Growth Mission Coordinator was our speaker. Her topics included: Bold By Design; Virtue During a Virus; and Be Ye Flexible. The program was extremely inspirational.

Our next activity will be participating in Mission u virtually or in person, depending on the session our members decide to attend. Then we will be preparing for our District Annual Celebration to be

held at Mason First UMC in Mason Michigan on September 15, 2021. We are hoping to hold this function in person; however, all will depend on Covid 19 guidelines.

Mid-Michigan District sends Blessings to all of our sisters in the Michigan Conference,

Donna Kleiver

President
Mid-Michigan District
dmkleiver2016@gmail.com
(517) 663-4193



The grass is green, the spring flowers are blooming, and the leaves are popping out on the trees. Spring is here and my heart is feeling joy! We held our Spiritual Growth event on ZOOM and everyone who participated was filled with joy! I forgot to tell you that our theme was being joyful.

It has been hard over the last year to feel joy in our hearts as so much seemed to be taken away from us. We are reminded that the most important thing was never taken away from us, the love of God. We look forward to our next district event which is June 10th, our Mission Evening event. This will also have to be held on ZOOM, it is so good to see each other's faces even if we can't be in person. Micki Phelps and Sharon Appling will be speaking on the "School to Prison Pipeline". We are also going to encourage every United Methodist Woman in our district to sign up for

Mission u's virtual opportunities this summer, I can't wait for us to gather Oct.2nd in person for our District Annual Celebration and what a celebration that will be!

My prayer for everyone reading this is that your hearts are filled with the joy that the Holy Spirit has given us as we come together to do the Lord's work in our communities and the world wherever it is needed. Don't let negative thoughts and deeds take over where love, joy and happiness need to reside. God bless you all and remember that you are each a blessed child of God.

Linda Burton-Collier

President, Greater Southwest
(269) 793-7340,
lindaburtoncollier@gmail.com



Mission u



Mission u

There's Far More Here

THAN MEETS THE EYE

So we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without [God's] unfolding grace. [...] There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18, The Message (MSG)

We have known and felt what it is like when “things are falling apart on us.” We have experienced a great unraveling that has shifted, quite literally, everything.

Could there be, as 2 Corinthians put it, “far more here than meets the eye”?

Mission u, like many activities in our lives, has moved online. While virtual, we are still creating spaces for spiritual community, lifelong friendships, lessons that change us and our communities, and spiritual practices that arrive when we need them most. In a time when it looks like things are falling apart on us, God's grace is still unfolding and life is being made new.

Indeed: There's far more here than meets the eye.

Will you join us?

At our upcoming **Mission u**, we will examine anxiety, the culture of violence that impacts children in and out of schools, and how we as God's people can deepen our moral witness and respond faithfully.

Our 2021 **Mission u** will offer the following studies:

- ***Finding Peace in an Anxious World***, edited by Erin James-Brown
- ***Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*** by Monique Morris
- ***Bearing Witness in the Kin-dom; Living Into the Church's Moral Witness Through Radical Discipleship*** by Darryl W. Stephens

Join us:

Available Now: **Finding Peace in an Anxious World**, edited by Erin James-Brown
at: <https://www.umwmichiganconference.org/MissionuVideos.html>

July 9-10, 2021 VIRTUAL: ***Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools***
by Monique Morris (FREE)

August 13-14, 2021 VIRTUAL: ***Bearing Witness in the Kin-dom; Living Into the Church's Moral Witness Through Radical Discipleship***
by Darryl W. Stephens (FREE)

October 18-19, 2021: Mission u of the North, Gaylord UMC – \$70
Payable to: Mission u. Lodging is on your own

RSVP: <https://michiganconferencemissionu.square.site/>

Or email to: MIMissionu@gmail.com Name, District, Church, and Dates attending.

Mail check/info to: Sally Messner, 124 Boyd Street, Fife Lake, MI 49633



Important 2021 Dates:

June 1-6 ~ Michigan MUC
Annual Conference

July 9-10 ~ Mission u - Virtual

August 13-14 ~ Mission u - Virtual

October 18-19 ~ Mission u of the North
Gaylord First UMC

October 23 ~ Conference Annual
Westwood UMC ~ Kalamazoo

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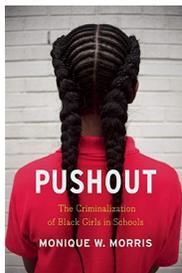
The Official Newsletter of the Michigan Conference United Methodist Women

Published three times a year: January, May and August

Send submissions by the 10th of the previous month to
Sally Messner, sallymessner@yahoo.com

Mission u 2021 Dean

I am excited about our upcoming opportunity to be a part of Mission u! This year we are offering opportunities for you to participate via ZOOM to study *PUSHOUT* and our *Bearing Witness* studies. Out of our concern for health protocols concerning Covid-19 we felt utilizing virtual technology was the safest way to go. We hope that the fall Mission u of the North will be able to be done in-person! Stay tuned.



growth aspects we offer as United Methodist Women. For those coming back, we hope you will enjoy this accessible format. You may even want to gather a few friends and participate together!

Follow the registration materials to get your seat in this timely event. I look forward to meeting you and taking this journey together!

Nichea VerVeer Guy

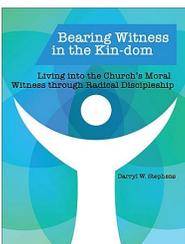
Mission u Dean

SAVE THE MISSION u DATES:

July 9-10, August 13-14 - Virtual

October 18-19 ~ at Gaylord First UMC

Look for in-person registration in the next VOICE!



This virtual event is a great opportunity for those who have not done Mission u to get an idea about the relevant study materials, experienced leaders and spiritual

Can Tabs



Aluminum can tabs are no longer being collected for United Methodist Community House. If you have a local organization that collects them, please feel free to donate them. If you are crafty, there are many crafts that can be made using these tabs.