

# Florida Conference United Methodist Women



# Genesis

May 2020; vol. 47 no. 2

Website: [www.flconfumw.org](http://www.flconfumw.org)

## Purpose

*United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God, 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.*



Be still and know that I am God!  
I am exalted among the nations,  
I am exalted in the earth” Psalm 46:10.

At times I get so busy “doing God’s work” that I forget to allow God to “work in me.” At the beginning of the year, I selected the verse above as part of the signature for my UMW email account to remind me to take time to be still and listen to God’s voice when I am too entrenched in the “work.” Each time I reply to an email from that account, I practice being still. Approximately mid-March I started receiving emails with subject lines: “cancelled,” “postponed,” “rescheduled,” from my District Day Apart, to the Haitian Convocation, the Districts Spiritual Retreats, or local units’ events. The spiritual discipline of being still to listen to God’s voice helped calm my anxiety and guided my decisions for the Conference organization.

As our world seemed quickly to come to a halt with the words “stay home,” “social distancing,” “quarantine,” flashing on our screens, another disturbing email arrived: Mission u cannot happen as designed. As I touched the small reply arrow with a trembling finger, I read “Be still, and know that I am God.” That split second brought my mind to our 2020 Conference events theme: “Moving Forward in Unity.” At first, I thought “how can we move forward amid so many uncertainties? How can we move forward not knowing if we will be able to gather at all this summer? Then, I read “I am exalted among the nations; I am exalted in the earth.” This reminded me we are not in charge of the “if” or the “when;” we should not be anxious about them either.

Therefore, we are moving forward with plans to bring the Anxiety study to children and youth across the conference and to our membership. We are moving forward with our planning for the Spiritual Enrichment Retreat in September with the Rev. Monique McBride. We are moving forward with plans for the Annual Meeting in November with our General Secretary/CEO, Harriett Jane Olson. We are leaving the unknown to the One who holds the future.

Peace and Grace,

*Judith P. Okerson*

Deaconess Judith Pierre Okerson, PhD  
President United Methodist Women,  
Florida Conference, United Methodist Church

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## Greetings from your Conference Vice President...

I hope this note finds each of you well amid this pandemic we all are dealing with. My prayers are with each of you as this crisis affects each one of us in some way or another. As we strive to live each day by our PURPOSE, I have felt lately that there should also be a phrase in it that states as United Methodist Women, we should, each day, be flexible. Why do I say this? It is because that is exactly what we have been faced to do. There are times when gathering in person is not possible, whether it be due to illness, transportation issues or necessary distance. Technology offers wonderful solutions to help us to continue our fellowship, even in trying times.

We have and are continuing to be flexible and “think outside the box”. From video conferencing, conference calls, to adapting programs, to recording meetings, we are finding helpful and useful ways to continue to stay in touch and keep our connection with one another. We do not know what the future holds, nor how long our self-quarantining will last, but there are a variety of ways to stay connected. Please continue to reach out to your counterparts and know your Florida Conference Leadership Team is here for you.

Although some of your local United Methodist Women groups will not meet during the summer months, face to face or virtually, I want to take this opportunity to remind you of a few things you can do during your break. Please review your minutes, check your program calendar and your program planning sheets. Once we are through this pandemic, you will want to hit the road running, so please remember to send your Mission Today, Rainbow Givers, 5-Star Units, & your Reading Program reports to your district leadership team before your Annual Meeting. Let us have one hundred percent of each of these reporting’s at the Conference Annual Meeting in November!

It is not too early to start making plans to carpool to attend the Conference Spiritual Retreat, September 11-13, 2020 at the Life Enrichment Center in Fruitland Park (Leesburg). The theme is “Moving Forward in Unity” and our Adult retreat leader is the Rev. Monique MacBride and Kenya Monroe, will lead the Youth Retreat. All units are encouraged to sponsor at least one youth from their local church to experience this event. Limited scholarships from the Conference are also available for the youth to attend. Please see the attached flyer, and feel free to contact your District Presidents for more information.

Our Conference Annual Meeting will continue with the theme “Moving Forward in Unity” and we are honored to have United Methodist Women’s, C.E.O. / General Secretary, Harriet Jane Olson as our guest speaker! The gathering will take place November 14, 2020 at First United Methodist Church, Lakeland. Please start spreading the word for this event as we want to be sure and give Harriet a great big FLORIDA welcome!!

Be safe and Be well,  
Shelley Davidson  
Vice-President  
Shelleydavidson.umw@gmail.com



MOVING FORWARD IN  
UNITY

# Florida Conference Spiritual Enrichment Retreat



September 11-13, 2020



LIFE ENRICHMENT CENTER

4991 PICCIOLA RD., FRUITLAND PARK

RETREAT LEADER: REV. MONIQUE MACBRIDE

YOUTH LEADER: Kenya Monroe

"She is clothed with strength and dignity and she laughs without  
fear of the future". Proverbs 31:25 (NLT)



## A Memo from the Secretary...

In these unexpected and difficult times nothing is more pressing in the work of United Methodist Women than the care for our planet, women, youth and young adults. We have been asked to reduce our physical contact by staying six feet from each other as we strive to flatten the spread of COVID-19, to protect the health of our families, friends, coworkers and neighbors.

Mission u and our Reading Program has prepared us for a time like this. The one I am reading currently is Finding Peace in an Anxious World by Erin James-Brown. This book uses the book of Proverbs and “The Serenity Prayer” as a guide to help Christians find their way through anxiety, worry, and fear and move towards God’s peace that surpasses all understanding.

Take a minute and call members of your units, districts, and conference team. If your local unit have not done their Census report, please do so! If you have already reported, forward me your confirmation by email. I am aware that the deadline date has passed, but I want to make sure your unit is counted.

The Serenity Prayer reads: God, Grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can and the Wisdom to know the difference.

Jackie Brooks  
Secretary UMW Florida Conference  
[Jbrooksumw@gmail.com](mailto:Jbrooksumw@gmail.com)  
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## Working together...while remaining apart!

When Cornerstone Family Ministries (our National Mission Institution in Tampa) put out the call for 7000 masks for children and 1000 masks for teachers, I knew that members of United Methodist Women would respond and the sewing machines would be humming! Initially I decided to leave this effort to those accomplished seamstresses among us, but deciding that even a drop in the bucket is still at least a drop, I pulled my sewing machine from the back corner of the closet and dusted it off. Not having a clue how to begin, I reached out to Sharon Dixon (First Land O’Lakes UMW), who had already sewn dozens of masks. After receiving some initial advice, I called Sue Parker (New Hope UMW), who I often rely on for many things, and learned about t-shirt yarn, among other valuable tips. Margaret Masters (Lake Magdalene UMW) provided supplies, including oodles of t-shirts for the aforementioned t-shirt yarn. Judi Levan (First Land O’Lakes UMW) isn’t sewing, but ordered 100 yards of hard-to-come-by elastic for those of us who are. So many women working together, each contributing in her own way. What a blessing!

Like many other things in these crazy times, Mission Giving is presenting unique challenges. Many of the faithful women in FCUMW are facing financial setbacks. This, along with the cancellation of circle meetings and district events, is bound to have an effect. We need creative solutions to keep United Methodist Women afloat at all levels, engaging in mission for women, children and youth. This is more important now than ever.

Those of our women who are facing financial hardship need to be encouraged to take care of their own needs first, and honor their Mission Giving pledges when able. Those of you who can, please remember to honor your pledge, and perhaps exceed it, to help make up for our sisters who are struggling.



Put a check in the mail to your unit treasurer today. Working together, while remaining apart, we can continue to be Faith...Hope...and Love...in Action!

Donna Spear, FCUMW Treasurer

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## READING PROGRAM INFORMATION

Jannett S. Hawley,  
Secretary Program Resources

My Dear Readers,

This has been a very strange time for all. I had to resort to coloring my own hair!!! To be perfectly honest, I didn't like looking like a skunk! I've also made bread and cooking more than usual adding more pounds to this gorgeous body! 😊

Please remember to turn in all your numbers of read books for 2019 to your unit, and they report to the district for their annual meeting. I will be sending the SPR's a letter later with instructions for what is needed for the conference. Since we are homebound, we should be able to read our wonderful "reading program" books, devour Response magazine, join webinars and Faith Talk podcasts. Enjoy this time by thanking God for all he has given us. Pray for those that are on the front lines of

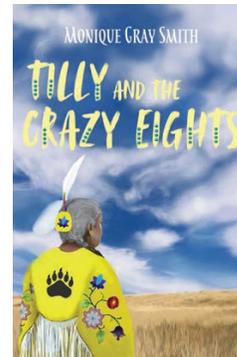
this pandemic and plead the blood of the Lamb for all hungry, homeless and those ill.

## FAITH TALKS: A PODCAST JUST FOR YOU.....

Faith Talks are monthly conversations with United Methodist Women. Each conversation explores themes and resources that empower us to put faith, hope and love into action. Check out interviews with United Methodist Women mission studies' authors and more: @ [unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks](https://unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks)



## 2020 READING PROGRAM SUGGESTION: GREAT READ!



TILLY AND THE  
CRAZY EIGHTS  
(*Nurturing for Community*)  
MONIQUE GRAY  
SMITH  
SECOND STORY PRESS  
(2018)

Tilly impulsively agrees to drive eight elders on their ultimate bucket-list road trip. This adventure with "the Crazy Eights" will transform them all in ways they could not predict. The Crazy Eights each choose a stop on the way to their ultimate destination, the Gathering of Nations Pow Wow in Albuquerque. The trip proves to be powerful medicine as they laugh, heal, argue and dream along the way.

I learned a prayer from this book and on waking I pray: *Thank you for the safe passage through the night and for the gift of living another day.*

**Please Enjoy, I certainly did!**

## Why be Involved in United Methodist Women...

During this current season of uncertainty, God has given me a sense of calm and peace. This is not only due to my relationship with God but due to the relationships I have developed with other United Methodist Women. UMW is an organization that has given me opportunities where I could put my faith into action to help those in need.

When I didn't know how to help during COVID-19, it was Cornerstone Family Ministries (UMW National Missions) who presented a need. They put out a call to action for masks for children and teachers for the 160 child care centers it serves. I am not a sewer or seamstress, but I realized that I am a part of a great group of women who possess this talent. The request was made, and a simple email was forwarded to our Florida Con UMW president, and with-in minutes a "call to action" was posted on the Florida Conference UMW webpage for these masks. UMW units throughout FL used their time and talent and donated several thousand masks for children and teachers to be used in our daycare centers.

As Christian women, we are called not only to "believe" but we are also called to put our beliefs into action. It warms my heart to know that I am aligned with an organization of women who love and know the Lord and who pour time and talent back into her communities. When women ask me about United Methodist Women and what it all means I am quick to share why I am involved, and I am delighted to ask them to come to our events so they can experience what we are all about; and I ask if they are willing to share their God given talents with the world.

In closing, I am asking each of you to pray about becoming more involved. I am asking each of you to please share your talents with us. Please view the Florida Conference UMW website, see how we put God's love into action, and please fill out the talent bank sheet, or if you want to be a part of our future leadership teams, please view and fill out the forms that are attached to our website. The Committee of Nominations team is looking for you, a woman who is ready to share her gifts with our team. Get involved today. Jesus is calling will you, answer the call and share your gifts with the us.

Kenya Monroe

Chair, Florida Conference United Methodist Women's Committee on Nominations



## Mission u 2020 Update

The threat of COVID-19 has changed our world in ways beyond our imagination. In early April the United Methodist Women National Office made the difficult decision to cancel the study leaders training. But through it all, as an organization we remain focused on our mission to women, children and youth.



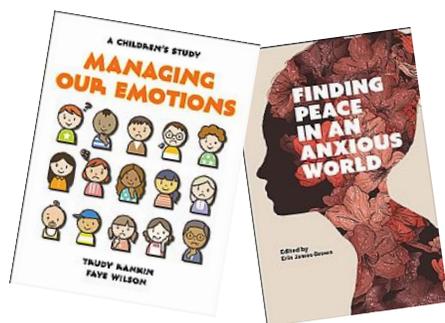
With this commitment in our heart and in our mind, the Conference leadership agreed that while we will not have our usual Mission u event in the summer of 2020, the Florida Conference United Methodist Women will offer the spiritual growth studies this year. The topic is anxiety from a spiritual perspective.

We believe that in our current fear-induced environment it is our responsibility to offer the youth and children's studies (Managing Anxiety, Managing Our Emotions) to the young people and their parents in our districts and local congregations in 2020. We owe this to our children and youth as they will be dealing with the trauma of the COVID-19 outbreak for a long time. We are still in the discussion stage but hope to have plans for implementation as soon as we can gather in large groups.

The spiritual growth study for adults is titled "Finding Peace in an Anxious World." We can think of nothing more relevant for us today as we face the reality of the first major coronavirus pandemic since 1918. We would like to have a Zoom-based version of this study available this summer. We will keep you informed.

The Conference Mission u Committee is meeting in May to coordinate the details and make plans for implementing all three 2020 spiritual growth mission studies and other Mission u events in our districts and local churches. Meanwhile we encourage each unit to order at least one copy of the study books for now. Each book costs \$10 and can be ordered at the United Methodist Women online store at <https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/mission-studies>.

Please email us with your thoughts and ideas. May God keep us calm in this time of great anxiety in our lives, our respective community, and the world.



*Judith Pierre-Okerson, Ph.D.*, President  
Florida Conference United Methodist Women

*Sharyn Ladner Ph.D.*, Dean  
Florida Conference Mission u

## **“ CELEBRATING FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY” EAST CENTRAL DISTRICT UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**



After our monthly meeting on Saturday Feb 08, we celebrated the Month's Birthday's with delicious cake and refreshments. We also enjoyed some great poems.

During this coronavirus I been making Masks for the elderly and kids from church, neighborhood. Giving comfort with prayers and keeping in contact with those that can't get out of their homes.

“Los muchachos se fatigan y se cansan, los jóvenes flaquean y caen;  
pero los que esperan a Jehová tendrán nuevas fuerzas;  
levantarán alas como las águilas;  
correrán, y no se cansarán;  
caminarán, y no se fatigarán”. Isaias 40:30-31

Con Dios a Nuestro lado, todos, aunque vulnerables, podemos lograr grandes cosas. “Muchas veces el proposito de Dios no es cambiar la situacion sino cambiarte a ti.”

En la noche mas oscura Jesus no abandona tu casa, y en medio de la mas fuerte Tempestad tamboco abandona tu barca.

La meta de Dios no es solo bendecirnos ,es convertirnos en bendicion para otros.  
Dios conoce lo que has estado viviendo y aun cuando no lo veas ha estado Transformando tu Corazon, preparandote para recibir todo lo que te ha prometido Para que tu Corazon permanezca firme en el....

Iris Rodriguez  
Hispanic Language Coordinator

## Southeastern Jurisdiction Meeting,...

We know everyone is anxious to know the status of the jurisdiction meeting. It is not an overnight process to reschedule an event of this size, especially considering that we have worked on it for four years. The National Office is working as quickly as they can to have definite plans for our event as well as for the other four jurisdictions. Please remember that we (the entire United Methodist Church) are all in a state of rescheduling events; and, so many things depend on the decisions of other events. As soon as plans are finalized, the SEJ President Betty Helms, will notify all Conference Presidents. In the meantime, please be patient. Stay safe. Stay well.

Gertrude J. Stewart, Secretary/Registrar  
Southeastern Jurisdiction UMWomen

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Rev. Denise Sawyer has traveled to several of our Conference and District events from her home in Cape Coral Florida. As a chaplain there, she is in an office by herself. Like many of us, all her activities have been cancelled, and no volunteers are allowed; plus she lives alone! She was lonely. Our Conference President sent out a plea to remember our “supportive community” and send cards and prayers her way. You did!

From Denise...

Each day I go to the mailbox and there is a card. Thank you United Methodist Women of the Florida Conference for holding me in prayer and in your hearts during this time. Your cards are encouraging and uplifting.



The long-planned Author Event that First-Sarasota held on March 10<sup>th</sup> was a success! Our speaker chose to not come from Seattle – at that time the first “epi-center” in the US for the coronavirus – and we chose to do the event via teleconferencing – with many thanks to God for the idea! Jeffrey Staley, the author, enthusiastically shared many photos and stories related to his wife’s maternal grandmother’s life at the Methodist Mission home for Chinese women in San Francisco in the late 1800’s/early 1900’. This was the inspiration for his fiction-from-fact book, *Gum Moon*. He responded to our questions with helpful insight. Gum Moon Women’s Residence is still an active and vital National Mission Institution of United Methodist Women.



## SPECIAL TIME ALERT!

**5/14 Thursday, 7:00 pm Zoom Video Clinic: "Coping with COVID Stress" with United Methodist Women Member: Jane Murphy, MSN. This is being offered by Oceanview United Methodist Women, Atlantic Central District.**

After dinner on this coming Thursday night, brew your coffee or tea, relax and plan to join us via phone, tablet, laptop or computer. United Methodist Women's Jane Murphy, MSN will share her medical expertise on ways to cope, manage and yes... ENJOY... our current COVID Social Distancing restrictions. Further discussions: the latest medical recommendations, most likely future scenarios and how to plan ahead, stay ahead and stay well in the midst of continuing health needs.

Everyone is invited to attend this Zoom Video Conference Clinic - via smart phone, tablet, laptop or computer. Simply follow the directions given after you register.

**Sign up ... in advance for this meeting:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUlcuqtpjIoE9ZRJbkcyjwJna-qDp6UNtsk>

**After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.**



The facilitator: Jane Murphy, MSN knew her calling was nursing from high school. Both her undergraduate and graduate degrees are in Nursing. After graduation, she married her college sweetheart. His Military career meant moving to wherever he was stationed. Jane seized that opportunity to learn, practice and mentor nursing in different hospitals and major clinics throughout the United States. She is a multi-disciplinarian nurse specialist who now works for the West Palm Beach Veteran's Administration Medical Center. One of her most favorite responsibilities as a nurse has been to mentor new nurses and new doctors in interdisciplinary clinical work, patient advocacy, and clinical observation/evaluation skills. Through it all, Jane has maintained her drive to help others, to heal and to put the patient's needs first. Healing, first and foremost, comes naturally to Jane.

-  
Linda Parrish  
President, Atlantic Central District United Methodist Women

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8



## South East District Units' Responses to COVID-19 Social Isolation

I'm overwhelmed by the action and enthusiasm from our South East District units as they cope with the social isolation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of course, there are a lot of meeting cancellations, but I'm so impressed with the innovative solutions our units employ for connecting with each other: Here are a few examples:

- Pat Gibson, Key West unit president, reports that she has “learned a lot about technology in past couple of weeks, reaching out to members via email, telephone,” and moving to Zoom meetings soon.
- Miramar unit president Ola Duhaney reports that they “are communicating daily on our WhatsApp Women's page, e-mails, and by calling each other and praying with them.”
- First Boca unit president Pam Davis emailed me a list of activities her unit is doing to connect people, including the following:
  - We began a new effort, “CARE”, Connecting and Reaching Everyone (in the unit and prospective members). Their Executive Committee makes contacts at least 2-3 times a week by phone, text, emails.
  - Sending almost daily updates regarding UMW opportunities from the website, Faith Talks podcasts, along with a focus on the Reading Program, and justice/advocacy info.
  - Focusing on church members in nursing homes, helping families see each other through Duo and FaceTime on their cell phones.
  - Helping through ongoing efforts to get people the ABC's of effectively using technology.
  - Utilizing a program from the Program Book via Zoom in a circle meeting, and incorporating some tips like mindfulness, stress, and other strategies that she has learned about from reading the Anxiety Mission Study.
- Other units are also looking into Zoom as a way to meet and are asking for help.



- And finally, Burton Memorial secretary Edith Zewadski-Bricker reports that as of April 29, UMWomen Jeanine Stelzner and Pat Fincannon made 137 protective masks for teachers and children at Cornerstone Family Ministries in Tampa.

*Thank all you  
Ladies - you all  
are fantastic!*



# Florida Conference United Methodist Women

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Lakeland, FL

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May 2020 *Genesis*



**Make It Happen!**

## FLORIDA CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

### Calendar of Events - 2020

July 11	Leadership Team	via Zoom
September 11-13	Spiritual Enrichment Retreat	Life Enrichment Center Fruitland Park
September 19	Florida Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church	TBA
October 3	Leadership Team/Charter For Racial Justice	Lakeland
November 14	Conference Annual Meeting	First United Methodist Lakeland

**MOVING FORWARD IN UNITY**  
**Florida Conference Spiritual Enrichment Retreat**  
**September 11 – 13, 2020**  
**Life Enrichment Center**