

United Women in Faith is 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.

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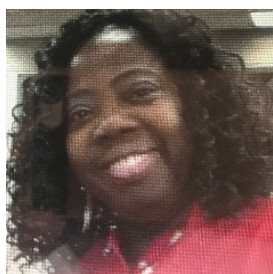
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“Be still and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.” Psalm 46:10s

Faith, Action, and Sisterhood

One hundred fifty-three years ago, eight women ventured in a stormy weather to go to Tremont Methodist Episcopal Church in Boston, MA. They went to listen to the story of a missionary’s wife. Less than six months later, they had raised enough money to send, not just one, but two professionals, a doctor and an educator, to India as missionaries. **This is a faith story!**

Standing Rules, policies, and by-laws and even a name for this emerging organization were not their priorities that night. They were more interested in **taking action** on behalf of marginalized women and children across the ocean.



Recently I saw this picture on a Facebook post. Of course, the quote, from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., caught my attention right away as the theme for both the Spiritual Enrichment Retreat and the Conference Annual Celebration this year is “Moving Forward in Faith.” The quote also made me think of these foremothers who took the leap of faith and decided they will work to remediate the systemic societal injustice toward other women even when they did not know how they will get the financial resources or how long it will take for that dream to become a reality. They did take the first step, they started planning!

Check out the two National Institutions in Florida:



Corners one

However, the picture itself spoke to me in a unique way. The stairs getting narrower as they go up remind me the journey requires more than just taking one step at a time, it requires that I walk next to my sister at time (when the path is wide), and another time I need to be behind to allow my sister enough room to walk the narrow path trusting that God is on the journey with both of us equally. With this understanding we both can move forward knowing that we are not alone. Whether we walk side by side or one behind another, we support each other in the journey. This is what our United Women in Faith **sisterhood** is all about!

I pray you will join us September 9-11 at Warren Willis United Methodist Conference Center for the Spiritual Enrichment Retreat with Rev. Tiffania Icaza Willetts as our retreat leader. We have made both online and paper registration available for your convenience in this issue of Genesis. Registration closes August 15th. In the spirit of sisterhood, we ask that you get vaccinated against COVID for everyone's safety. We are, all, indeed our sisters' keepers. Let us continue to trust God is walking each step with us and will lead us farther than our eyes can see. We just need to *"Let our eyes look straight ahead, and fix our gaze directly before us"* Proverbs 4:25 (NIV).

Judith P. Okerson

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

The women below have been nominated as members of the Committee on Nominations, Class of 2026. The election will be held at the Conference Annual Meeting, on Nov. 19. If any of you are being called to serve on the conference, please contact Ester Kim at esterkim.umw@gmail.com.



Paulette Monroe has served the organization in many leadership roles as Past Florida Conference President of the United Methodist Women, Southeastern Jurisdiction Leadership Team, Committee on Nominations, Coordinator for Children and Youth for Mission u, Dean of Mission u and as a Study Group Leader. In addition to serving the organization, she was privileged to have had the opportunity of serving as a Past Conference Lay Leader of the United Methodist Church.



Linda Rush is a United Methodist Woman from the North Central District. Linda worships at Pleasant Plain UM-Newberry, where she serves as Secretary of Church Council, choir member, works on the hospitality committee and many more. Linda served on the North Central District Committee of Nomination and Program of Resources. Linda worked in the school system for many years before retiring.



Spiritual Enrichment Retreat “Moving Forward in Faith”

September 9-11, 2022
Rev. Tiffania Icaza Willetts, Facilitator
Warren Willis UM Conference Center
Fruitland Park, FL

TO REGISTER, PLEASE CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/381979359547>

Scholarships are available!
Registration Deadline: Aug. 15, 2022
The deadline for applying for a scholarship is before Aug. 15.
Please ask your District President for details.

We prefer that you register via Eventbrite, but there is a paper registration form in this issue. If you have problems registering via Eventbrite, you can contact Linda at lindaparrish.umw@gmail.com.



United Women in Faith

Florida Conference of The United Methodist Church

Spiritual Enrichment Retreat Registration Form

Sept. 9-11, 2022

Warren Willis UM Conference Center 4991 Picciola Road, Fruitland Park, FL 34731

Name: _____ Phone (____) _____
As you would like it on your name tag Cell Phone (____) _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

E-Mail: _____ District: _____

- \$145 for room (Friday, Saturday nights, double occupancy) and meals (Saturday breakfast – Sunday breakfast)
\$185 for room (Friday, Saturday nights, single occupancy) and meals (Saturday breakfast – Sunday breakfast)
\$85 for room (Saturday night, double occupancy) and meals (Saturday lunch – Sunday breakfast)
\$105 for room (Saturday night, single occupancy) and meals (Saturday lunch – Sunday breakfast)
\$50 for Commuter (Saturday lunch, dinner and day fee)

Make checks payable to: Florida Conference United Methodist Women.

A limited number of Scholarships are available. Check with your district president. Scholarship deadline is Aug. 13. Include Registration form with scholarship application.

Registration Deadline: Aug. 15 Check-in begins on Friday, Sept. 9 at 4:00 P.M.

Choice of Roommate: _____

Housing Needs (1st floor, Handicapped) _____

Do you need wheelchair access? _____ Do you need an interpreter for the hearing impaired? _____ Do you need a language interpreter? _____ Language? _____

In case of emergency, please notify:

Name: _____ Relation: _____

Phone: (____) _____ Cell Phone: (____) _____

Allergies or Medical Concerns: _____

Health/Dietary Needs/Other _____

Childcare Needed? _____ Number of Children _____ Ages: _____

PLEASE ATTACH COPY OF COVID-19 VACCINATION CARD TO THIS REGISTRATION. PROOF OF VACCINATION WILL BE REQUIRED UPON ARRIVAL TO RETREAT.

Send to Registrar: Donna Spear, 5107 N Seminole Ave, Tampa, FL 33603.

Phone: 813-293-4281 Email: donnaspear.umw@gmail.com

Social Action Opportunity

From Edith Zewadski-Bricker, Social Action Liaison to the Florida Conference Leadership Team

“I thought that was illegal!” “In which states is it legal?” “Is it legal in Florida?”

These were a few of the responses heard at Mission u to our Social Action opportunity to support Protecting our Students in Schools Act (POSSA) of 2021.

The topic is corporal punishment in public schools. The response to the topic was more energized than for any other social action opportunity at our Florida Conference Mission u 2022.

Almost 70,000 students were subject to corporal punishment in the school year 2017, according to the most recent reliable statistics available. However, some suggest that this is an undercount. Fact is, Corporal punishment is still legal in 19 states, of which, unfortunately, Florida is one.

No matter how you feel about corporal punishment such as spanking, paddling, beating, and stress positioning, consider it in light of racial justice and the current United Women in Faith campaign Ending the School to Prison Pipeline, which we all know ends in mass incarceration with the majority of the population being BIPOC (Black, Indian, People of Color). Data shows that Black students are far more likely to be subjected to corporal punishment than white (and to some degree Native students). Specifically, Black students are 15.1% of enrollment, but 37.3% of students subjected to corporal punishment.

Join with me in supporting this legislation, Protecting our Students in Schools Act of 2021. This is a bill which would cost the government nothing to enact but would make a significant difference in the lives of children and youth, and in correcting racial disparity, and in ending the School to Prison Pipeline. Just click on the link: <https://p2a.co/xODeK7y> and submit your letter to your congressional representatives in Washington DC. This social action is easy and will take you no more than two minutes just click!

The image shows a digital form for a social action campaign. At the top left is the United Women in Faith logo. The main heading is "End Corporal Punishment in Schools - Support POSSA". Below this is a text box containing information about the campaign and links to legislative bills (Senate Bill 2029 and House Bill 3836). To the right of the text box is a form with input fields for "Title", "First Name", "Last Name", "Address", "Zip", "Phone", and "Email". Below the form fields is a call to action: "Share with members in your conference to urge action." followed by the URL <https://p2a.co/xODeK7y> and a small star icon.

▶ Sign up for e-mail Action Alerts

Southeastern Jurisdiction Honored during Assembly 2022



LEADERSHIP AWARD AT LEGACY BANQUET

The Southeastern Jurisdiction Team from last quadrennium was honored with the Leadership Award at the first-ever Legacy Banquet at Assembly. As you know, the gathering for SEJ had to be canceled in 2020 due to COVID. Under the leadership of Betty Helms, immediate past President, the Team decided that any budgeted monies left after all expenses were paid would be given to the Legacy Fund of United Women in Faith (United Methodist Women at that time). When all the numbers were in, \$90,000 was given to the Legacy Fund.

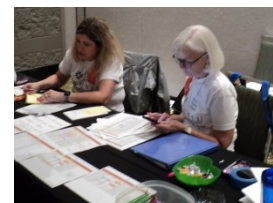
Because of the generosity of these women, National and International Mission Institutions will be able to continue their valuable work on into the future.

Sue Owens, President of SEJ this quadrennium, could not promise a repeat performance as the Chattanooga Choo-Choo will be pulling into Chattanooga April 26-28, 2024. She did assure attendees, however, that the legacy United Women in Faith would live on in the Southeastern Jurisdiction.



of

Contact:
Kay Roach, Vice President
Southeastern Jurisdiction UWF
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Kayroach.sejumw@gmail.com
850-570-5482



11th Annual Haitian United Methodist in Faith Convocation

The 2022 Haitian Convocation was another big success with 209 people, including 47 youth and children, gathered for a day of worship, fellowship and learning. We were honored to have two district superintendents among the participants: the Rev. Dr. Cynthia D. Weems from the South East District, and the Rev. Dionne Chandler Hammond from the Atlantic Central District. This year nine Haitian churches attended the event. We hope and pray next year, God willing, all the Haitian churches in the conference will participate.

Our Guest speaker, Jeannie Jacques, developed exceptionally well our theme “Knitted Together in God’s Love”. She reminded us to remain united and to refrain from judging others. The Florida Conference United Women in Faith President, Deaconess Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson, provided information about the new name of the organization, explained this is the same organization with the same aim to be in mission on behalf of women children and youth. She encouraged participants to register for the Turn It Up Assembly in Orlando.



She also shared Bishop Carter’s letter in response to the misguided information those who are leaving the church are spreading about The United Methodist Church. Bishop Carter appealed to the churches in Florida to

- Take the high road.
- Give an account for the hope that is in you.
- Remember that we are scriptural, grace-filled, and missional people who want a church for all, no exceptions.

Bishop Carter recommended the following three resources that dismantle the lies about our church.

1. The Narrative of the Continuing United Methodist Church
2. #BeUMC
3. A Community of Love and Forgiveness

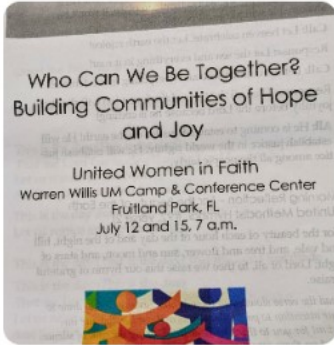
We want to thank the Florida Conference United Women in Faith for their support. We also thank all our English-speaking sisters who faithfully support the Convocation with their presence. The Convocation concluded with the usual Bible trivia. Three Mission u scholarships were awarded as prizes to the winners.

The 12th Haitian Convocation will take place at Fort Pierce Haitian United Methodist Church **March 18, 2023. Please do SAVE THE DATE!**

Deaconess Ruth Pierre Jean Pierre
Convocation Planner

Photos from the in-person Mission u event, 2022

People really do have whole heads. Apologies to Cathy and Lorraine!



SAVE THE DATE

November 19, 2022

For the

49th Annual Meeting



United
Women
in Faith

Florida Conference
of The United Methodist Church

First Lakeland United Methodist Church

Theme: Moving Forward in Faith



Featuring

Sally Vonner,

Transformation Officer

United Women in Faith, National Office

Love that Logo!

I knew change was on the horizon, but changing our organization's name caught me by surprise! I practiced out loud, finding out how "United Women in Faith" rolled off my tongue. Then I saw the logo! I found it immediately appealing – its colors, its symmetry – bright and beautiful!

I joined the United Methodist church during college and immediately accepted its logo without giving it much thought. I had the same reaction when I became a member of United Methodist Women. A few years ago, however, someone mentioned that "our country has had too many flaming crosses in its history". I couldn't get that out of my head, and the logos haven't seemed the same to me since.

But back to our beautiful, colorful new logo. As I looked at it, I noticed that it's built around the cross. The cross is the basis, but the petals are new life arising from it. I continued to contemplate. The eight petals are each the same (shape), but yet different (color). In fact, each petal is next to another that is exactly like itself, but also next to another that is alike and yet different. Isn't that what our sisterhood is about? With our faith at our core, we stand together in solidarity, embracing our similarities and our differences. When you put us together, we're bright and beautiful! Did the creator(s) of our new logo have these same thoughts and intentions? I haven't a clue. But, I will forever love our new logo, and enjoy knowing that its history is now forever intertwined with mine.

Donna Spear



Celebrating the Life of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune!

During our Mission u event on July 11, we celebrated Mary McLeod Bethune day as a foremother Methodist Woman! On that day a statue of Mary McLeod Bethune was unveiled in Statuary Hall at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. This is the first black woman to be in Statuary Hall and to our continuing joy she represents Florida. McLeod Bethune's statue depicts the Black educator, civil rights activist and suffragette in an academic cap and gown.

"Today we are rewriting history. We want to share with our future generations, with a symbol of hope and inspiration," said Rep. Frederica Wilson.

The statue was created by Fort Lauderdale artist Nilda Comas who won a national competition. Her artistic process is to research her subject's personality and history "so I learned that she is quite an interesting person, coming from a humble background," noting that Bethune's



parents were slaves. "She pretty much taught herself to read

(APPhoto/Jacquelyn Martin)

and write after a little white girl told her Blacks couldn't do that. She was a very good friend of Eleanor Roosevelt.

When Blacks were denied education, she built a school; denied medical care, she built a hospital. When the world was grappling with authoritarianism, she helped establish the foundational commitment to human rights through the United Nations."

At the foot of her statue is McLeod Bethune's famous quote:

"Invest in the human soul. Who knows, it may be a diamond in the rough."

To learn more about Mary McLeod Bethune, do an internet search.

Here is one of many links to her history:

<https://news.yahoo.com/wesh-2-chronicle-dives-life-012609581.html>

Pam Davis writes, "I am proud to be a Floridian, a **United Women in Faith**, and life-long educator. I have been privileged to have taken and taught classes on the BCU campus as a part of UMC, Florida Conference, Mission u. Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, made a difference in the lives of many men, women. and children, impacting lives of future generations by providing a quality education. "

See if you can find out why she carries a black rose.



Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune left a lasting legacy at Bethune Cookman University. She left a lasting legacy in her participation in the writing of the Charter of the United Nations. She left a lasting legacy in her ongoing dedication to making the world a better place for women and children and youth. You too can leave a lasting legacy with a substantial donation to the 1869 Society of United Women in Faith. Such a legacy that will carry the mission work of the church forward for the next 150 years. **Just like Mary McLeod Bethune, you can impact the future by what you do today. Won't you join us and make a difference?**

Pamela Davis, Florida Conference, Dean, Mission u 2022 & Legacy Liaison

Be a Rainbow Giver!

We'll soon be celebrating our 2021 Rainbow Givers at our district and conference annual meetings. Rainbow Givers have gone above and beyond by...

- ✚ Making (and keeping) a Pledge to Mission
- ✚ Gifting someone a Special Mission Recognition pin (a gold or even a sapphire?)
- ✚ Recognizing someone with a Gift to Mission card (Isn't receiving a card in the mail fun?)
- ✚ Honoring someone special with a Gift in Memory (recently passed or remaining forever in our hearts)
- ✚ Contributing to the World Thank offering (remembering our blessings with gratitude)

Don't delay! 2022 will be gone before we know it, along with its end of the year deadline. Act now and be a Rainbow Giver for 2022! (Contact your unit, district or conference treasurer for more information.)



This is the limited edition of the 150th anniversary pin.

National Website address: <http://uwfaith.org>

**FLORIDA CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
2023 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

January 7	Mission u Committee Meeting	Zoom
January 21	Program Committee Meeting	Zoom
February 11	Leadership Team / Membership Emphasis	Zoom
February 25	CON Committee Meeting	Zoom
March 4	CON District Training	Zoom
March 11	Haitian Convocation	Ft. Pierce UMC
March 18	Program Committee Meeting	Zoom
March 25	Mission u Committee Meeting	Zoom
April 22	Leadership Team / Charter for Racial Justice	Zoom
May 6	Program Committee Meeting	Zoom
May 20	Mission u Committee Meeting	Zoom
June 7-10	Florida Annual Conference - UMC	Lakeland
July	Mission u Event	TBA
August 4	Program Committee Meeting	Lakeland
August 5	Mission u/Finance Committees	Lakeland
September 8-10	Spiritual Enrichment Retreat	WWUMCC, Fruitland Park*
October 7	Leadership Team / Membership Emphasis	Zoom
November 4	Conference Annual Meeting	TBA
December 1 – 2	Goals & Evaluations	WWUMCC, Fruitland Park*

The highlighted events are the ones that the general membership will want to attend. Others are for various committees, etc. If you would like to be a part of the conference leadership, please contact Ester Kim at esterkim.umw@gmail.com.

FLORIDA CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH 2022 EVENTS

Mission u (evenings - English)	July 26, 28, Aug. 2, 4	Via Zoom
Mission u (daytime - English))	July 29 – 31	Via Zoom
Spiritual Enrichment Retreat	Sept. 9 - 11	Warren Willis United Methodist Conference Center, Fruitland Park
Conference Annual Meeting	Nov. 19	First UMC, Lakeland
Advent Retreat	Dec. 4	Via Zoom

United Women in Faith 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.

Florida Conference United Women in Faith

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Summer 2022 Genesis