



# Genesis

Winter 2023; vol.50 no. 3

FL conference Website: <https://flconfuwf.org>

*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.*

**President:**

Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson  
judithpierreokerson.umw@gmail.com

**Vice-President:**

Vacant

**Secretary:**

Mary Van Tol  
maryvantol.umw@gmail.com

**Treasurer:**

Donna Spear  
donnaspear.umw@gmail.com

**Sec. of Program Resources:**

Jackie Brooks  
jbrooksumw@gmail.com

**Committee on Nominations Chair:**

Ester Kim  
esterkim.umw@gmail.com

**Dean, Mission u 2024:**

Dr. Nora Hernandez Hendrix  
[norahh51@hotmail.com](mailto:norahh51@hotmail.com)

See page 5 for the 2024 officers.

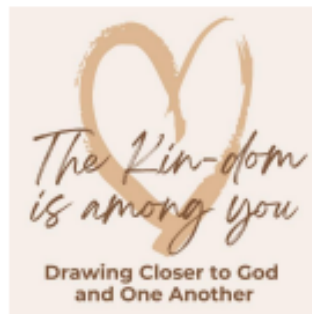


## Save the Dates for Mission u 2024: Friday, July 19 – Sunday, July 21

The Westin Lake Mary, Orlando North  
2974 International Parkway  
Lake Mary, FL 32746

Virtual Mission u 2024 will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays, July 23, 25, 30, & August 1

Join us at Mission u 2024 as we explore what it means to draw closer to God and one another.



Mission u 2024 offers three exciting curricula on this theme. Order your copy here: [uwfaithresources.org](http://uwfaithresources.org)

Adult: Welcome Home by Neomi Fletcher

The adult curriculum uses the image of home to explore how living in close proximity to the kin-dom is like making a home with God. Participants are invited to develop practices for building healthy, welcoming communities as a result of being anchored in the abiding love of God.

Youth: Cultivating Symbiosis - The Nature of God's Kin-dom by Nica Sy

In Creation, we see the power of symbiosis, or interdependent relationship. The youth curriculum explores the idea of symbiosis between our relationships with one another and our relationship with God. By drawing closer to one another and our world, we draw closer to the kin-dom.

Children: Me in the Kin-dom by Kathy Cook

The children's curriculum uses the Lord's Prayer as a lens to help us see that we are all members of the family of God. Children will begin to understand that the kin-dom is living with Christ and one another on earth as in heaven.

More Information Coming Soon!



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

### **O Come, O Come Emmanuel!**

Advent is my favorite time in the Christian liturgical calendar. During that season as we prepare to celebrate what has already come, the first coming of Christ as a humble human being in a manger, we prepare for and anticipate the celebration of what is to come, the second coming of Christ as the glorious Lord!

As I conclude my term as President of the Florida Conference United Women in Faith, I celebrate all that we have accomplished the past fifty years altogether, but particularly the journey we have experienced these last four years in spite of all the unforeseen changes that have occurred in our world, our organization, and our denomination. COVID19 pushed us to embrace new ways to hold our meetings and provide training for the membership. The rebranding of the organization brought us more excitement to reach out to women outside of the walls of a church to join us in our mission work on behalf of women, children, and youth. About thirty five percent of the churches disaffiliated from the conference, but yet women from several of those churches decided to remain part of the organization. All these things call for celebration. With great expectations for our future, I am anticipating the growth we will experience as a conference organization as we put our Faith in Christ, our Hope for the future, and our Love for all God’s people into action.

As I reflect on the past fifty years, I am grateful for the commitment of all the women who have led this conference organization, but most particularly I celebrate the lives and services of four former conference presidents who have consecutively joined the great cloud of witnesses these past four years: Ann Hunter, Nancy Wineberg, Ressie Mae Bass, and Betty Sue Mason. I am also anticipating and celebrating the leadership our next president, Linda Parrish, will provide to the conference organization as we start building our history for the next 50 years and paving the path for a new generation of women to follow.

So, with great expectation and anticipation let us continue to proclaim God’s Justice and Love as we sing and pray “O Come, O Come Emmanuel !”

I wish you all a blessed season of Advent and a fruitful New Year!

Shalom!

*Judith P. Okerson*

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

**Thank you , Judith, for your leadership for the last four years.  
Enjoy your “retirement”, but please know that you are on my speed dial!**

Linda

## Are/Were you a member of a disaffiliated Church?

1. Want to stay with your church but retain your membership in United Women in Faith? You can join a unit at another church or join as a district member.
2. You can become an “all access member” –go to <https://uwfaith.org/get-involved/become-a-member/>
3. If you are looking for a United Methodist Church, You can transfer your church membership to the Conference until you find a congregation where you feel comfortable to call your own. Here is the link: <https://www.flumc.org/moving-membership>

## Check out the two National Mission Institutions in Florida:

<https://www.wesleyhouse.org/>



<https://cornerstonefamilyministries.org/>



## \$\$ Treasurer Talk \$\$



By Donna Spear, Treasurer, Florida Conference United Women in Faith

Can you believe 2023 is coming to a close? As I reflect on the past year, I'm so very grateful for all of you who support Mission Giving and keep our mission efforts going on behalf of women, children and youth in the United States and around the world. I thank God for you!!

Many units make use of a Pledge Service in a meeting toward the beginning of the year. Our current one is entitled *How Does Generosity Nourish the World and My Relationship with Jesus?*

“The Pledge Service is a time to look back and look within to consider what we have done and can continue to do to meet the needs of women, children, and youth, now and in the future. This is an important moment when we as members of United Women in Faith focus on our financial giving and prayerfully consider why we give each year through our Pledge to Mission.” (from the UWFaith website)

Pledge cards are also available and ready to print, two to a page. You can find the **Pledge Service** and the **Pledge Cards** at UWFaith.org, under “Shop and Download”. While there, you can peruse the downloads to see what’s available. **OR**, you can email me at [donnaspear.umw@gmail.com](mailto:donnaspear.umw@gmail.com) and I'll send both to you. The Pledge Service is also in the program book.

Thank you for giving, thank you for pledging, and thank you for educating yourself and others about Mission Giving. Happy New Year to all!





*Get Together!*  
*Chattanooga Convention Center*  
*Chattanooga, Tennessee*  
*April 19-21, 2024*

.....**REMINDER**.....

*Time is drawing near....*

*Early Registration expires **December 31, 2023** (\$210)*

*As of **January 1, 2024** - (\$240)*

*Go to: [www.sejuwf.org](http://www.sejuwf.org)*

**2024 Conference Officers and nominees for national office**  
**These women were elected at the Conference Annual Meeting in November.**

Conference President and UWF Board of Directors - nominees must be professing members of the UMC.  
 Other elected leaders and UWF Program Advisory Group - nominees must be members of UMC or were UMW members as of January 1, 2019.

<p><b><u>FL Conference</u></b> - 2 year term          President - Linda Parrish (AC)          Vice President - Ester Kim (GC)          Secretary - Mary Van Tol (SW)          Treasurer - Donna Spear (GC)          Program Resources - Jackie Brooks (NE)          Haitian Language Coordinator - Rendy Blanchard (SE)          Hispanic Language Coordinator - Angela Kim (SE)</p>	<p><b><u>United Women in Faith</u></b> - national organization</p> <p><b><u>Board of Directors</u></b> - 2 nominees, 1 alternate, 4 year term          Jackie Bridges (NC)          Pam Davis (SE)          Jennifer Noel (alternate) (AC)</p> <p><b><u>Program Advisory Group</u></b> - 3 nominees, 4 year term          Natacha Etienne Joseph (SE)          Deaconess Mae Griner (NC)          Kenya Monroe (GC)</p>
<p><b><u>SEJ</u></b> - 3 voting delegates          President, VP, CON Chair</p> <p><b><u>Committee on Charter for Racial Justice Policies</u></b>          President          CON Chair          Language coordinator - Rendy Blanchard (SE)          District President - Jane Darling (NC)          LT member - Angela Kim (SE)          2 members - Edith Zewadski-Bricker (SW), Ann Eachus (SW)</p>	<p><b><u>CON - Class of 2027</u></b>          Veta Daley (SW)</p> <p>Class of 2024 - Mary Reed (NC), Ethel Ewing (GC)          Class of 2025 - Ciliane Louis (SE), Gail Donley (NC)          Class of 2026 - Paulette Monroe (EC), Linda Rush (NC)</p> <p>Paulette Monroe - Chair 2024-26</p>

**Please note that the conference and the districts are ALWAYS on the lookout for those willing to take an office. Please contact your conference or district Committee on Nominations chairs for more information. If you don't know who your district CON chair is, ask your district president. Taking one of these offices is a serious matter, but I have found that the rewards far outweigh any other concerns.**



**Don't be shy!**

## Multicultural Dolls Project



Florida Conference United Women in Faith has been awarded a \$500 Charter For Racial Justice grant. Our proposal is to use the money toward the purchase of multicultural baby dolls for us to dress. The dolls will then be given to our Mission Institution preschool programs or a local program the unit chooses.

January 2024 - PHASE I: Invitation from Conference Charter for Racial Justice (CRJ) Committee to units to present the brief program, “What do dolls have to do with the Charter for Racial Justice?” This program looks at the harmful impact of racism on young children and challenges the units to make outfits for multicultural doll(s) for our Mission Institution preschools or a local preschool chosen by the unit.

February – PHASE II: Units will contact the child development center of their choice to ask permission to provide the agency multicultural doll(s) and dressed in the outfits they have made. They will find out the ethnic makeup of the center to help decide what dolls (Black, Asian, Hispanic, White) to order. Patterns for sewing or knitting doll clothes will be posted on Conference web site <https://flconfuwf.org>

February 20: Deadline for requests from units for multicultural dolls purchased by UWF in bulk. Units will specify how many of each of the four ethnicities they wish to receive and send \$5 for each doll. Units unable to fully resource the project, may request a doll(s) at lower or no cost. Requests should be sent to the unit’s District President or Ann Eachus at [ann@eachus.org](mailto:ann@eachus.org)

March – PHASE III: The CRJ Committee and the Conference Leadership Team (LT) will review requests and place a bulk order for dolls. Units will plan publicity and/or social media postings of the project.

March 20 - PHASE IV: Dolls will be delivered to participating units, and units can commence the sewing or knitting outfits.

October/November 2024 District Annual Meetings and November 9 Conference Annual Meeting – PHASE IV: Units will place the dolls on the altar for UWFaith members to lay hands on the dolls and pray for the recipients. Representatives of the two Florida Mission Institutions will be present to accept the doll(s) and their outfits. Pictures will be taken of the presentation. Units choosing local child development centers will take their dolls back to present after returning from the meeting if no staff person attended. Pictures will be taken then too. A release must be signed by parents of any children pictured.

By November 23, Thanksgiving – PHASE V: The units will send a press release or post on social media a picture and caption naming those in the picture (left to right) coupled with a brief explanation of why multicultural dolls are a tool to negate the pernicious racism that insidiously harms young children, of all ethnicities/cultures. Publicity may go to church and UWFaith District newsletters, local newspapers, email dailies i.e. Anti Racism Daily (ARD), social media, Genesis, and/or response magazine.

By December 15 – PHASE VI: Units will report to their District Presidents or the project coordinator Ann Eachus on all publicity. Send news clippings, social media printouts, or copies of communications requesting publication.

January 2025: The CRJ Committee and the Conference LT will assess the project and submit a grant project report to UWFaith national office, and gratitude from the Florida Conference for the funding opportunity.

## 2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 5-7	Leadership Development	WWUMCCC
Feb. 25 – March 1	Children’s Week	Tallahassee
January 20	Program Committee Meeting	Zoom
March 16	Haitian Convocation	ELShadai, Wesley Memorial, Ft. Myers
March 23	Legacy Day of Giving	On- line
April 19-21*	Southeastern Jurisdiction Quadrennial Event	Chattanooga, TN
April 23-May 3	General Conference – United Methodist Church	Charlotte, NC
June 6-8	Florida Annual Conference - UMC	Lakeland
July 10-14	Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference - UMC	Lake Junaluska, NC
July 18-21	Mission u / Spiritual Retreat Event (name TBD)	Lake Mary, FL
July 23,25,30 and Aug 1	Virtual Mission u	Zoom
November 9	Conference Annual Meeting	TBD

\*Early registration for the Quadrennial Event ends on Dec. 31. After that there is an increase in the registration fee. Go to <https://sejuwf.org/> to register.

From Conference Secretary Mary:

As we look back on 2023, I would like to thank all the secretaries for the work of keeping the records for your districts. For those who are completing your terms, be sure the new secretary has the last four years of minutes and records and the previous four years are placed in an archival area for your district. Some district superintendent offices may have a place to store them. Be sure to ask!

Thank you all for sending me your 2024 slate of officer information. Be sure to send any updates as soon as you receive them. Wishing all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

My new email is [maryvantol.uwf@gmail.com](mailto:maryvantol.uwf@gmail.com)



United  
Women  
in Faith

*Dear United Women of Faith Sister!*

**I** want you to be a part of the exciting news that I want to share with you. The total giving as reported at the end of October, is **\$34,426,462.90** for the **Legacy Endowment Fund!** Additionally, our 2023 Conference contributions are **14,329.68**, with the Cumulative Contributions (*inception to date*) are **316,472.96** We are 10<sup>th</sup> in the nation in Conference giving. Further, the report shows that we are 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for our total contributions! Thank You! **Congratulations!**

**A**s we enter the season of Advent, I invite you to take time to look back at where you've been, celebrate the countless contributions, inspiring actions, and hard-won progress we've made; and to look forward to where we have yet to go. In our Advent giving, we can genuinely uplift others through your gifts to the Legacy Fund!

***Make your Legacy gift today!***

**W**e are humbled by your generosity! Remember, every dollar donated to the Legacy Fund makes a difference for the future of United Women in Faith. Thank you for helping us to sustain a mission that will impact women, children, and youth into the future.

**L**astly, in this season of Advent and Hope, we thank God for our blessings through your prayers and giving. As we near the end of 2023, you may wish to consider making a lasting gift to UWF in your will with a bequest. Individuals may make a gift of a specific amount or a percentage of their estate to support the campaign. For more information about this giving opportunity, go to <https://uwfaith.org/give/legacy-fund>. You can donate via ph# 800-278-7771, or send checks to:

United Women in Faith  
Attn: Legacy Fund  
Church Center for the United Nations  
777 United Nations Plaza, 11th Floor  
New York, NY 10017



**Faith, Hope, Joy, and Love in Action!**

*Pam*



