

# Voices of Purpose

March 2026

Quarterly Newsletter of the Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith

## *President's Message*

Central United Women In Faith – led by Abigail Too Circle sold homemade Easter Eggs for missions this year. One of the ladies made pink, purple, and yellow flowers with green leaves to identify the wrapped eggs. Then on Tuesday, March 24 in the evening we weighed and rolled the eggs from 6:00PM until 8:30PM.

We made butter crème, peanut butter, and coconut to go with the pink for butter cream, yellow for peanut butter, and purple for coconut. Next, on Friday, March 27 in the evening we dipped the eggs in chocolate and added the flower in Adams Hall.

Then on Saturday, March 28 in the morning we bagged and added pink, yellow, or purple curly ribbon from 9:00AM until 12:00 Noon in Adams Hall. We made 1200 Easter eggs and sold them on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday.

We have been making Easter eggs for several years now to help with our mission giving.

Holly Cyrus, GNJUWFaith President



## *Issue Highlights*

- *Community Care*
- *Mission u 2026*
- *Assembly 2026*
- *Recycling Tips*
- *Artificial Intelligence*
- *Mass Incarceration*

**March 2026**

**Inside this issue:**

President's Message	1
Inside this Issue	2-4
Welcome Statement	5
Easter Greetings	6
In Memory of Barbara Brown	7-8
GNJUWFaith Spring Meeting – Racial Justice and Summary	9
Importance of Community Care	10
Planting Spring Flowers	11-12

**(continued on page 3)**



United  
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## March 2026

### Inside this issue (continued)

UWFaith Grants Report	12
District News & CAD UWFaith Annual Tea	13-15
UWFaith Campaign Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline	16
Legacy Endowment Fund Campaign	17
GNJUWFaith Spring Meeting Photos	17
UWFaith Assembly 2026 Information	18
Mission u 2026 – <i>Experiencing Emmanuel</i>	19
Recycling Tips – Environmental Sustainability	20
Angels in the Operating Room	21-23

(continued on page 4)



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## March 2026

### Inside this issue (continued)

Fried Pickles	24
Crossword Puzzle – Animal Kingdom Babies	25
Artificial Intelligence	26
UW Faith Reading Program 2021-2026	27
GNJUWF 2026 Calendar	28
About <u>Voces of Purpose</u> with Deadlines and Distribution Dates	29
GNJUWFaith Leadership Team 2025-2026	30-31
Social Action Resources	32
Crossword Puzzle Answers	32

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Editor: Joyce Pratt  
GNJUWFaith Communications Coordinator



United  
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in Faith

March 2026

## Greater New Jersey Conference United Women in Faith

### Welcome Statement

GNJ United Women in Faith affirms that the grace of God is extended to all God's children without exception.

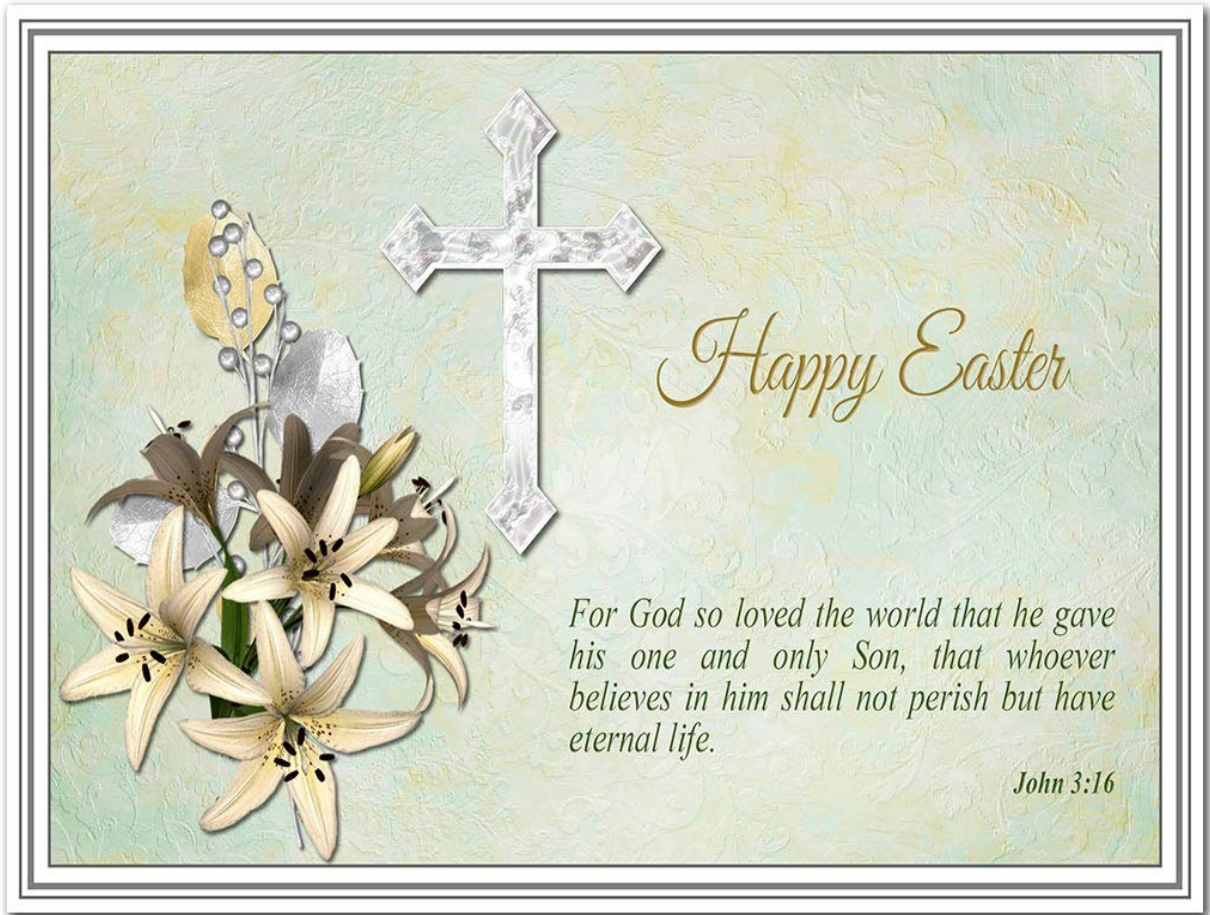
United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities.

We are committed to the inclusion of people of every gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation as well as people of every age, ethnicity, physical and mental ability, level of education, and family structure, and of every economic, immigration, marital, and social status.

**We make a bold choice to work for intersectional peace with justice and to create inclusive communities that respect the dignity and sacred worth of all God's children, and honor our shared, common humanity.**



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***Wishing you a joyful Easter filled with hope, love, and the gentle reminder that new beginnings are always possible.***

**Sincerely,  
GNJUW Faith Volunteers**



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# In Memory of Barbara Brown

## BARBARA BROWN

Camden County CWU

St Andrews UMC – Cherry Hill NJ

Barbara Brown was born in New Haven CT during the Depression and raised as the only child in a multi-generational African-American household. She attended college in CT and completed her graduate studies in library science at the NJ College for Women, later named Douglass College, at Rutgers in New Brunswick NJ. She earned her teaching credentials while employed by the Princeton school district. She later served as the head librarian of the Trenton Area school district. Barbara was one of the educators who provided feedback to Crayola about the need for crayons which allowed children to color diverse skin tones. Crayola responded to the need by introducing the “Multicultural” set of 8 crayons selected from existing crayon colors in 1992. More recently, Crayola partnered with color experts to create sets of 24 crayons, markers, and colored pencils using an inclusive palette of skin tones with rose, almond or gold undertones marketed in 2021 as the “Colors of the World”.



Barbara (seated) and granddaughters Diana Douglas, Taylor Brown, Lakeisha Brown, and Phayar (“PR”) Minhas.

While growing up, Barbara spent the summers with “Aunt Sissy” (Mrs. Clayton) in Bordentown NJ. She recalls the Manual Training and Industrial School for Colored Youth where Aunt Sissy worked and participating in mission outreach to migrant workers in the cranberry fields along Rt 206. Barbara later met and married Reverend Walter Brown, pastor of the Mt Zion A.M.E. Church in Bordentown. Walter was a member of the National Urban League. The couple were sent to various cities in Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia where they promoted higher education, employment, and civil rights of African Americans during the 1950s and 1960s. They returned to NJ where Walter pastored at the Ferry Avenue UMC in the Centerville neighborhood of Camden, and at Mt Zion Wesley UMC in Wenonah. Aunt Sissy was the glue that helped to run the household for the family during their ministry in NJ.

Barbara has been active in Church Women United over the years. She was a presenter at the CWU-NJ 2017 Spring Assembly “Water: Counting the Drops” hosted by St Andrews UMC in Cherry Hill. She has prepared numerous displays, such as “Where Women Pray” (2018) and “Living a Legacy of Love: Doing God’s Work” (2023). She continues to serve as a mentor and advisor to the CWU-NJ state unit. She is known for her baking skills including the lemon cake which she brought to CWU-NJ Executive Board meetings.

## In Memory of Barbara Brown

(continued from page 7)

Barbara is a life member of the Phi Delta Kappa educational sorority. Barbara served as a former Basilius of the Pi chapter based in Trenton which celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2023.

Barbara is a member of Black Methodists for Church Renewal, served for many years as a lay delegate to annual conference, and is a member of United Methodist Women, serving as a Central district officer in the Southern NJ Conference and attending the Cooperative School of Mission for many years.

Barbara moved to Cherry Hill after the death of her husband and joined St Andrews UMC where she sang in the choir, was co-leader of the Sarah Circle UMW, engaged in the reading program and missions. Barbara is a member of the Anna Circle of St Andrew's United Women of Faith and serves on the Membership & Evangelism committee. Barbara served as a poll worker for the Camden County Board of Elections until 2021.

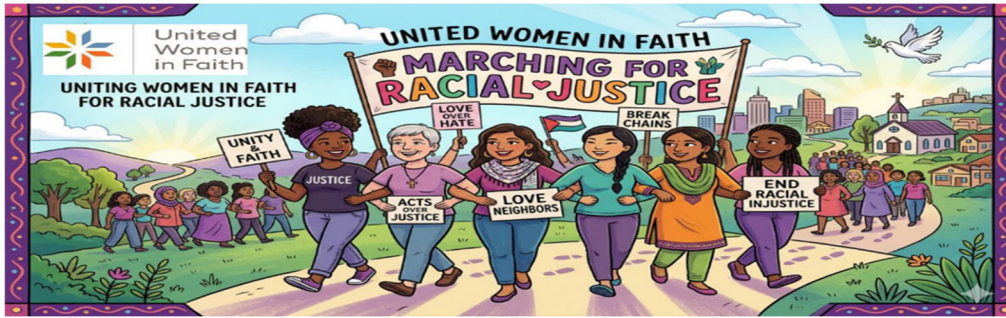
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We grieve, but not without hope—because in Christ,  
those who have died will live again.

**3. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14** (*paraphrased*)





## Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith Spring Meeting - "Racial Justice."

April, Saturday 11, 2026

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

9:00 am Registration. Pastor: Rev. David Yun

Central United Methodist Church, 5 Marvin Ave, Linwood, NJ 08221  
(609) 927-4882



**Advocate justice as you remember:**

**Mark 12:31** – *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

Self-love is essential to loving others; you must care for yourself to be able to serve others.

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## GNJUWFaith Spring Meeting Summary

On Saturday, April 11th at Central UMC in Linwood, NJ the GNJ UWFaith Ladies met to hear Joyce Pratt speak about Faith-Based Social Action. Faith-Based social programs integrate spiritual guidance with community services. Social action is distinguished from mere behavior preference based on familiarity. It is intentional, meaningful behavior toward others to create a positive change in society and to help improve community welfare. About 50 ladies and men attended the meeting.

This event was preparation for the PUSHOUT grant CADUWFaith District received to travel to Washington, D.C. and lobby our Senators for change concerning the school-to-prison pipeline issue. If anyone is interested in joining us, please contact Joyce Pratt at [joyce.pratt@tjassociatesnj.com](mailto:joyce.pratt@tjassociatesnj.com).

by Holly Cyrus, GNJUWFaith President

[See page 17 and <https://gnjuwfaith.org> website for photos.]

# Importance of Community Care

***Caring for our community involves initiatives that support vulnerable populations, promote health and well-being, and foster social connections. –Copilot Search***

## Importance of Community Care

Caring for our community is essential for fostering a supportive environment where all individuals can thrive. This includes addressing the needs of underserved populations providing resources for health and well-being and creating opportunities for social engagement.

## Key Initiatives and Programs

- 1. Caring for our Communities (CFOC).** This initiative, led by the Jennie Edmundson Foundation, connects high-risk, low-income individuals with local resources to help them overcome barriers to health and well-being. Community Health Workers play a crucial role in this program by providing support and guidance to those in need and ensuring they have access to essential services.
- 2. Caring for the Community.** This program focuses on empowering individuals with disabilities and their families through compassionate care and personalized services. It aims to foster independence and provide support for daily living tasks, ensuring that everyone receives the care they need.
- 3. Community Health Plans.** Many health organizations are developing community health plans that prioritize the needs of vulnerable populations. These plans aim to provide integrated and coordinated health care, adapting to the changing needs of the community and ensuring that care is accessible and culturally safe.
- 4. Compassionate Communities.** This approach encourages the development of networks that support individuals facing end-of-life challenges, grief, and loss. Resources and toolkits are available to help communities build connections and provide care for one another.
- 5. Social Justice and Support.** Organizations like Baptist Care focus on enhancing social justice and providing support for marginalized individuals. Their initiatives aim to tackle issues such as modern slavery and poverty, ensuring that everyone has access to the care and resources they need.

## Getting Involved

Community members can contribute to caring for their community by volunteering, participating in local initiatives, or supporting organizations that focus on community health and well-being. Engaging in conversations about community needs and advocating for vulnerable populations can also make a significant impact.

By working together and supporting one another, we can create a more caring and connected community for everyone.

# Planting Spring Flowers

**Creating a colorful, spring garden for you and your friends (figuratively and spiritually).**

## Timing and Planning

Successful spring planting depends on your local frost dates and hardiness zone. Tender annuals should be planted after the last frost, while hardy perennials and bulbs may be planted earlier if the soil is workable. For bulbs like tulips, daffodils, and crocuses, planting is typically done in the fall, but spring-flowering bulbs such as lilies or gladiolus can be planted in early spring. Layering early, mid- and late-spring bloomers ensures continuous color from March through June.

**“And why do you worry about clothing?” See how the flowers of the field grow...”**

**Matthew 6:28–30**

## Recommended Spring Flowers

Some easy-to-grow and visually striking spring flowers include:

- Bulbs: Daffodils, tulips, crocuses, hyacinths, snowdrops
- Perennials: Primroses, bleeding hearts, lungwort, wood forget-me-nots
- Shrubs and small trees: Forsythia, lilac, Korean spice viburnum
- Early nectar sources: Winter aconite, pansies, violas

These plants vary in height and bloom time, allowing for layered garden designs with groundcovers, mid-border flowers, and taller accents.

**“Then God said, ‘Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.’ And it was so.”**

**Genesis 1:11–12**

## Soil and Sunlight

Most spring bulbs prefer well-drained soil and full sun, while woodland perennials thrive in partial shade. Amend clay soils with compost or grit to improve drainage. Keep soil evenly moist for shade-loving perennials but avoid waterlogging bulbs.

**“But he said, ‘The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how.’”**

**Mark 4:26–27**

## Planting Tips

- Depth: Plant bulbs about 6 inches deep for tulips and daffodils.
- Spacing: Allow enough space for growth and naturalization. Crocuses, for example, spread over time to form colorful carpets.
- Succession planting: Combine early bloomers like crocus with mid-season daffodils and late tulips to extend flowering.
- Frost protection: Delay planting tender annuals until frost risk has passed and consider using mulch to protect early perennials.

***“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”***

***Philippians 4:19***

## **Maintenance**

- Water newly planted flowers regularly until roots establish.
- Remove spent blooms to encourage further flowering.
- Divide perennials after flowering if needed, marking their locations for easy identification. By selecting a mix of bulbs, perennials, and early annuals, preparing soil properly, and timing planting according to frost dates, you can enjoy a vibrant, long-lasting spring garden filled with color and fragrance.

**--Copilot Search**

***“If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!”***

***Matthew 7:11***

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## **United Women in Faith’s Grants to Interrupt the School-to-Prison Pipeline**

In our December 2025 newsletter, we shared the news of UWFaith’s seed funding grant for our project to “interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline” under Cape Atlantic District. The news in this article is to share with you the many others in New Jersey who received similar funding.

Emily Jones, Executive for Racial Justice, [Ejones@uwfaith.org](mailto:Ejones@uwfaith.org), hosted a virtual meeting on March 11, 2026 entitled “**School-to-Prison Pipeline Local Project Grantees Virtual Meeting.**” In the **peer learning circle focus meeting**, each of the participants were given 5 minutes to share their projects for which they received UWFaith funding. The meeting was co-facilitated by Emily Jones and Cynthia Holland, Consultant for Racial Justice and Decarceration, with a Q&A at the end. It was awesome! I was proud to present the work of GNJUWFaith under the leaderships of Presidents Sue Zahorbenski and Holly Cyrus! We still await a reply from a U.S. Senator to make our presentation at a U.S. Senate Assembly. Let us know if you have a senatorial contact we can call!

I wrote to Emily expressing my surprise and amazement to discover the many ways UWFaith women were addressing this issue. Our project covered legislative advocacy as did others, but many involved the actual schools affected or assistance to the incarcerated victims (current and released). Mindboggling efforts! Awesome social action! I requested summaries to share with our readers and instead was sent a recording of the virtual meeting. I will seek permission to share on our website or individually the stories from this meeting and let you all know.

I recently shared with President Holly that not a day goes by that I am not happy and proud to be a part of UWFaith and all of you who I have had the pleasure to work with. Keep up the excellent work you do!

Sincerely,

Joyce Pratt, GNJUWFaith Communications Coordinator

# District News

## CAPE ATLANTIC DISTRICT (CAD) UNITED WOMEN in FAITH PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Lou Hyson

[hysonforchurch@comcast.net](mailto:hysonforchurch@comcast.net)

Hi ladies of the Cape Atlantic District United Women in Faith and all of GNJ, as I write this article we've had a few days of warm weather, I'm hoping that we will have a spring this year and that it starts now. Last year it seemed to go right to summer right away bypassing spring.

As we start off this year, we have 4 wonderful opportunities to get together, show each other support, and learn what's going on and around our district and our conference of United Women in Faith. The first one has already taken place; we had our CAD Training Event via Zoom on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Our turnout was low, but the program was wonderful. I hope as we get back into the groove and learn better how to communicate together, that the turnouts for these programs increase.

Our keynote speaker for the training program was Joyce Pratt. Her passion is social action, and she talked about "Interrupting the School to Prison Pipeline." Also, she talked about a grant that CAD has gotten to work on this interrupting the school to prison pipeline. And she talked about legislative advocacy.

I talked about the impact of mission and justice and action and what we are currently working on (our key focuses for the next few years) which right now are mass incarceration, climate change, and immigration. What our calls to action includes and how we work to achieve them.

Our Vice-President Lynn Powell–Heulings talked about National and Assembly 2026 she also talked about **Our National Mission Institutions (NMIs)**. Welcome her to the team. Her email address is [lynniegirl825@aol.com](mailto:lynniegirl825@aol.com).

Our Treasurer Marian Whetstone talked about where the money goes and gave some Treasurer training information. This was Marian's final quarter as Treasurer for the Cape Atlantic District, she has more than served her time, we are sorry to see her go but we are happy that she is finally getting to relax and enjoy her young grandchildren. Please let her know how much we appreciate her and all that she has done. Her e-mail address is [getwhet@comcast.net](mailto:getwhet@comcast.net).

Taking her place will be Victoria (Vicky) Kaufman who comes from the Belleplaine United Methodist Church and is part of Dorchester's United Women in Faith. Please welcome her to the team. Any treasurer questions or problems from now on should be directed to Vicky. Her email address is [vkaufman715@gmail.com](mailto:vkaufman715@gmail.com).

(continued on page 14)

## District News

(continued from page 13)

### CAD UWFaith President's Message (continued)

Marilyn Powell talked about the Legacy Fund.

Amy Charleson our new Communication Coordinator was ill and couldn't make it. So, I filled in and talked about resources and branding. If you need information about communicating within and without the UWFaith family, you can send her an email at [amycha78@gmail.com](mailto:amycha78@gmail.com).

Also back on the team is Robin Lord who is the Spiritual Growth Coordinator. She provided the devotional at the beginning of the program. If you need to reach her for some reason her e-mail address is [rubbaoc@gmail.com](mailto:rubbaoc@gmail.com).

Anyway, it was a full program and people that have listened to the recording said it's very good. The recording will be available either by emailing me or going to <https://gnjuwfaith.org/>

The 2nd event on the CAD calendar is the CAD UWFaith Camden Neighborhood Center Tea which is taking place on April 25th at Port Elizabeth UMC. The flyer will be included with this newsletter and on GNJ UWFaith website which is listed above. If you are attending, please register ASAP so that we know how many we're feeding. Mike Landis, director of the Camden Neighborhood Center, will be our keynote speaker. He will tell us the latest news of what is happening at the Neighborhood Center. Our love gift and our in gathering go to the Neighborhood Center so please look at the flyer not only to register but to see what you should bring to the tea.

Our third event will be our Annual Spring Meeting taking place on May 30th at Belleplain UMC. The flyer will be coming out soon. Watch for it in your e-mail or on the Greater New Jersey UWFaith website.

Our 4th event this year we're hoping to have on September 26th will be our Annual Fall Meeting. We need some help with this one however, as we don't have a location. If you might be willing to have it at your church, please contact me or any of the team and let us know that you're interested in hosting this event.

While I'm thinking about it, we still need what are called AUC's to be on the leadership team. These are just communication helpers that are within a cluster of our units that can tell our units what's going on with the district and ask them what they're involved in and what their mission projects are that they are currently working on. So that we can tell their story and they are getting as much information that we can pass on to them. If you or anyone you know is interested in being an AUC, please contact me or anyone on the team.

Well, I think that's all the news I have right now. I hope everyone had a wonderful Easter. And I'm looking forward to our tea. Hope to see you there! OK



United  
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**Cape Atlantic District United Women in Faith  
Annual Neighborhood Center Tea  
Saturday April 25, 2026**

**Time: 11:30 am – 2:30 pm**  
**Pastor: Jim Scagnelli**  
**UW Faith President: Lou Hyson**

**Port Elizabeth United Methodist Church**  
**142 Port Elizabeth-Cumberland Rd,**  
**Millville, NJ 08332-8849**  
**(856) 825-2258**

**Keynote Speaker:**  
**Michael Landis, Executive Director of The Camden**

**1 John 3:18:** *"Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth"*

**Theme: Teapots and May Flowers – Showing Radical Love in bloom.**  
**Bring in your favorite teapot and/or flowers to share.**

Love Gift and Ingathering Recipient: The Camden Neighborhood Center  
Collecting: Art & Craft Supplies, Board games, Card Games, etc.

**Please RSVP: By April 17, 2026 to**

**Lou Hyson, UW Faith Cape Atlantic District President**  
**Phone: (856) 305-5238, Email: [hysonforchurch@comcast.net](mailto:hysonforchurch@comcast.net)**



## Serve and Advocate

# INTERRUPT THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

**We are called to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.**

United Women in Faith’s campaign to interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline is an expression of our priority commitment to end mass incarceration and the criminalization of communities of color.

We believe that all children and youth are sacred, deeply beloved by God, and deserving of an education that nurtures their God-given gifts and encourages their growth.

We decry the systemic racism that treats some children as disposable, funneling them away from educational success and towards the criminal justice system. We recognize as sinful the tendency of our institutions (“powers and principalities”) to show grace to White children/youth while withholding that same grace from Black children/youth and other children/youth of color.

Join us!



(continued on page 17)



## Legacy Fund 2026 Challenge

Every United Women in Faith conference is being challenged to donate to the Legacy Fund. And the conference with the most giving will be rewarded!

The goal is to reach \$60 million by Assembly 2026. Our current balance is \$52,455,923.00.

GNJUW Faith total contributions since October 31, 2025 is \$4,421.82. We are so close.

The results of the March 23<sup>rd</sup> Day of Giving will be available in May!

**Please give today!**

Marilyn Powell

GNJ Legacy Liaison

For giving details, visit: <https://uwfaith.org/give/legacy-fund/>.

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## GNJUW Faith Spring Meeting Photos





For details, visit: <https://assembly.uwfaith.org/website/82390/>

Assembly 2026 is a once-every-four-years gathering of women committed to faith, empowerment, and making a difference. Picture a weekend that uplifts your soul, strengthens your faith, and brings you together with an unstoppable sisterhood.

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## Assembly 2026 Town Hall

***Town Hall: Ending the Incarceration of Women and Girls with Andrea James.***

During Town Hall, you will learn about the work of the National Council and the urgent call for all women of faith to join in the work of ending the incarceration of women and girls. You will hear directly from Andrea James, Founder and Executive Director of The National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls.

Ms. James is an incredibly powerful organizer, an extraordinary gifted moral voice, and a visionary and strategic prophet for our time.

The session will take place in an interview/conversational style. It will make the most of this wonderful opportunity and prioritize the questions that are most important to you as participants.

Emily Jones, UWFaith Executive for Racial Justice  
Ejones@uwfaith.org



**Mission u 2026**

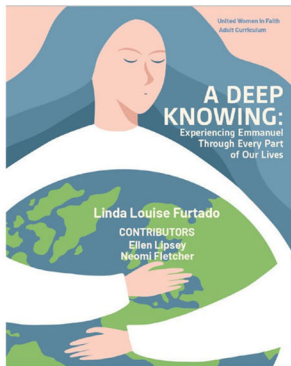
## Mission u 2026: Experiencing Emmanuel

Join us at **Mission u** as we explore the theme, Experiencing Emmanuel.

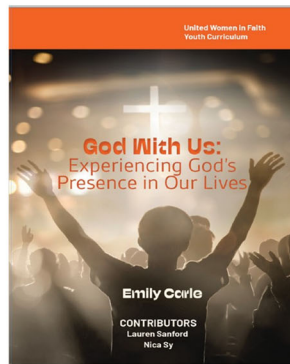
- How do we experience God in times of joy and in challenging times of anxiety, fear, or sadness?
- Can we experience God's presence in community as we work for justice?

Mission u will explore the times in the Bible when people experienced Emmanuel, or "God with us." What can we learn from these Emmanuel encounters in the Bible to help inform our discernment of faith, hope, and love in action?

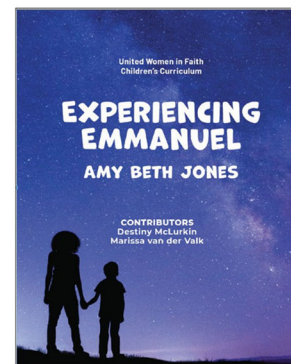
Mission u 2026 offers three exciting curricula on this theme. Order your copy at: [amazon.com/s?k="uwfaith"](https://www.amazon.com/s?k=uwfaith).



Adult Curriculum: *A Deep Knowing: Experiencing Emmanuel Through Every Part of Our Lives*



Youth Curriculum: *God With Us: Experiencing God's Presence in Our Lives*



Children's Curriculum: *Experiencing Emmanuel*

### JOIN US dates/times:

Friday, July 17-Sunday, July 19, 2026

Centenary University  
400 Jefferson St  
Hackettstown, NJ

### RSVP:

<https://na.eventscloud.com/87678>

Come learn together for the transformation of the world!



United  
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# Recycling Tips - Environmental Sustainability

Recycle smarter by cleaning, sorting, and avoiding contamination to ensure your recyclables are processed efficiently and effectively supporting a healthier planet.

## Know What Can Be Recycled

Before tossing items into your recycling bin, check local recycling guidelines to confirm what materials are accepted. Common recyclables include paper, cardboard, metal, plastic, and glass, but items like plastic bags, Styrofoam, aluminum foil, and greasy pizza boxes are often not recyclable and can contaminate the recycling stream if included. **Recycle Across America**

## Clean and Dry Your Recyclables

Rinse containers to remove food or liquid residue before recycling. Dirty items can spoil entire batches of recyclables, making them unusable. For cardboard, avoid recycling boxes with heavy grease or cheese stains unless they are clean. [www.recyclingtoday.org](http://www.recyclingtoday.org)

## Avoid “Wishcycling”

Do not place items in the recycling bin just because you hope they are recyclable. This practice, called wishcycling, can disrupt recycling facilities and increase processing costs. Stick to items you know are accepted and check if unsure. [www.recyclingtoday.org](http://www.recyclingtoday.org)

## Flatten and Sort

Flatten cardboard boxes to save space and make collection more efficient. Separate materials by type if required by your local recycling program, such as paper, plastics, and metals. Keep metal lids attached to cans by folding them inward to prevent sharp edges. [www.recyclingtoday.org](http://www.recyclingtoday.org)

## Avoid Plastic Bags

Never put recyclables in plastic bags or line your recycling bin with them. Plastic bags can jam recycling equipment and are difficult to process. If you must use a bag, empty the recyclables into the bin and take the bag to a designated plastic bag recycling location.

[www.recycleacrossamerica.com](http://www.recycleacrossamerica.com)

## Reduce Single-Use Items

Minimize the use of single-use plastics and disposable items. Reusable alternatives reduce waste and make recycling more effective. [www.recycleacrossamerica.com](http://www.recycleacrossamerica.com)

## Special Items

For hazardous materials like batteries, electronics, oil, or paint, use specialty recycling centers or coordinated drop-off programs. These items should never go in regular recycling bins.

[www.wikihow.com/Recycle](http://www.wikihow.com/Recycle)

## Label and Educate

Use standardized recycling labels on bins at home or work to help everyone recycle correctly. Educate family members or coworkers about proper recycling practices to reduce contamination and improve efficiency. [www.recycleacrossamerica.com](http://www.recycleacrossamerica.com)

--Copilot Search

## ANGELS IN THE OPERATING ROOM SCRIPTURE PSALM 23 NLT

The year was 2005, the month was May, the Spring flowers were awakening in my backyard. The air had a scent of promise. Little did I know that my life was to take a change that would lead me through a valley that was uncertain as well as scary.

**Toby McKeehan said, “Let the Lord fight your battles, He has not lost one yet.”** That reminds of a song my church sang some 25 years ago, ***Somebody prayed for me, had me on their mind—took the time and prayed for me. (The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.) Saints, my Lord prayed for me.***

I had an appointment for a yearly physical; this was mandatory through my employer. So, I wasn't too nervous, I had this type of exam every year. My doctor was examining me and asked me if I did regular breast examinations each month while in the shower. I said I did. My mother and my baby sister had breast cancer and survived. The doctor asked me, “did you feel a lump “and “I said no.” He said, “I feel a lump.” He had an associate female doctor working with him and he called her in to see if she felt a lump also. She came in and she felt a lump she said, “The lump is movable, so it probably isn't cancer. However, my doctor gave me the name and number of a Breast Surgeon and said to call him today, from his office. I called and made an appointment for the following week.

**The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm states: When we are uncertain or anxious, the Good Shepherd provides all we need.** So, I made an appointment to see the Breast surgeon, and he said, “The lump is movable, so it probably is not cancer, however, we will take some of the tissue and have it examined to be safe and sure.”

The night before my procedure, I prayed for angels. I prayed that angels would be around the staff that prepped and cleaned the OR, I prayed for the doctor who would give me the anesthesia, I prayed for the attending nurses, and I prayed for my surgeon. I don't remember praying for myself. I might have, I just don't remember. Then I went to sleep, ***and while I slept, He restored my soul.*** Saints, **when we think we're walking alone, The Good Shepherd is always walking beside us– He makes sure the rapids of our lives become still.**

My daughter Stephanie came from Northern Virginia to go with me to the hospital for my minor surgery. We arrived at the hospital at 5:30 am as the procedure was scheduled for 6:00 am. They told my daughter the procedure would take about 45 minutes to an hour. Since it was so early, all the specialists were there doing their rounds before they went to their private practice office hours. My daughter was waiting in the waiting area and three hours had passed. When she inquired about it, she was given vague answers. Basically, no answers. Saints, I am here to tell you, that MY GOD is always working around us. **Through the good and the bad, the Good Shepherd is restoring us, and He leads us in the path of righteousness for His name's sake.**

(continued on page 22)

## ANGELS IN THE OPERATING ROOM

(continued from page 21)

Before you have any procedure make sure you know all of your allergies and that you put that information on the medical charts. I had done that; however, it was missing—I don't know how, I just knew it was there and it disappeared. I was going through the valley of the shadow of death, yet I had nothing to fear. Friends asked me afterwards if I saw a bright light, I replied no, however, I am allergic to iodine, and when they injected me with blue dye which is iodine based, I went into severe anaphylactic shock. My Lord's rod and staff comforted me when I did not know I needed it. My reaction was immediate and so severe that the doctors put me in a coma for three days. We need to be reminded that God is our protector, and His goodness and mercy restore our souls—no matter what we are going through, or what is happening, God is always with us. The Lord prepared a table before me in the presence of my enemies, and my enemy at that time was iodine.

When I awakened, my sisters were standing around my bed, and immediately they started talking to me and reassured me that I would be all right. They said they came to be supportive of Stephanie. When I tried to speak, I couldn't because I was on life support! I looked at my daughter, and she smiled. However, I was getting into a panic—I was wondering why there was an instrument down my throat, and no one was telling me what was wrong. ***Isaiah 40:31 states but those whose hope is in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles—they will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*** That was the first time that I realized a person could be on life support and wake up alert and aware of their surroundings. He leadeth me through the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Only one person can walk with us through the dark valley and take us out to the other side. Our Shepherd, the God of life. Life is so uncertain that we should follow Him!

For the following three days after my same day surgery, doctor after doctor came to see me as 'the miracle woman.' My cup was surely running over with the Lord's blessings. The priority of our lives should be to let God change us, so that others can see the glory of God when they look at us.

My surgeon came in and knelt beside my bed and held my hand in his and looked me in the eye and said, "I don't know why you are still alive; it is nothing that I did, it was as if I was working in slow motion. He stated there was a presence in the OR that he could not explain. I smiled and said I prayed for angels and Jesus sent them. He said he believed the angels were there.

(continued on page 23)

## ANGELS IN THE OPERATING ROOM

(continued from page 22)

When I think about the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, I think about my surgery and in the midst of that psalm it states, the Lord prepares a table-for me right in front of my enemies, that day my enemy was death, however, God was with me. He had everything under His control. In ancient Eastern culture, at a feast it was customary to anoint a person with fragrant oil. Hosts are expected to protect their guests at all costs.

The time of my procedure, 6:00 in the morning. All of the doctors that I would need were in the hospital doing their morning rounds. Saints, all of my organs were shutting down! The cardiologist was there, the liver specialist there, the kidney specialist was there, the pulmonologist was there. Saints, God had me covered. It is so important to know all your allergies.

The Good Shepherd knows his sheep and He walks beside you; we are safe in the Shepherd's arms. I prayed for angels, and my God had me covered. God offers the protection of a host of angels when enemies surround us. In the final scene of this psalm, we see that believers will dwell with the Lord. God, the perfect shepherd and host, promises to guide and protect us throughout our lives and bring us into His house forever. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

That brings me back to the beginning of this message, the song I quoted, *somebody prayed for me, had me on their mind, took the time and prayed for me. I am so glad they prayed, I'm so glad they prayed for me.* The song has many verses, my mother prayed for me, my father prayed for me, yet my dear friends Jesus prayed for me and for you, because we were and are on His mind. I know that Jesus prayed for me, they told me that my heart was racing and yet I had no pulse. The hospital staff called me the miracle woman, I wasn't the miracle woman, I know the miracle maker, and that is why I am here today with you sharing my miracle with you. And I just say thank you Lord.

***We thank you dear Lord for miracles that can't be explained, and we pray dear Lord that we will keep sharing our stories of faith that others might hear and believe that you are the Christ who takes away the sins of the world and saves our souls. Amen.***

Call for discipleship and prayer. Closing prayer. Blessings and glory to you, O Lord, we are grateful for everyday miracles, the mere act of breathing is a miracle. Help us to be good stewards of your word and to be worthy of our calling through you, our Lord. In the name of Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Submitted by Virgie Williams, 3/30/26



# Fried Pickles

## Ingredients

- 12 Large pickle spears, drained and patted dry.
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 cups of panko
- 1 ½ inches Vegetable oil for frying
- ¼ cup Ranch dressing for serving
- 1 tbsp hot sauce for serving

## Directions

1. **Prepare the pickles.** Slice pickle spears lengthwise into thirds or quarters, depending on how thick they are, to create thin spears.
2. **Set up the dredging station.** In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, garlic powder, and kosher salt. Put the eggs in a separate medium bowl and the panko in a third bowl. Working a few spears at a time, dredge the pickle spears in the flour mixture, toss the spears in the eggs, then dredge in panko.
3. **Make the spicy ranch.** Mix together ranch and hot sauce, adding more hot sauce if desired. Set aside until ready to serve.
4. **Fry the pickles.** Pour about 1 ½ in vegetable oil into a large, deep skillet. Heat over medium heat until the oil reaches about 350 degrees F, or until the oil is shimmering. (If a splash of water sizzles when you flick it in the pan, it's ready.)  
Working in batches, add 3-4 pickle spears to the hot oil using tongs. Do not crowd the pan, or the oil will cool!  
Cook until the spears are golden brown on one side (about 1 minute), then flip and cook until the second side is golden brown (about a minute more).  
Place the fried pickles on a cooling rack lined with paper towels.  
Serve hot with spicy ranch.

--Anonymous

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“Let **food** be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.” – Hippocrates “

# ANIMAL KINGDOM BABIES

**Across**

- 1. Billy \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Young Cow
- 9. Japanese TV Company
- 13. absolutely accurate
- 16. advances
- 17. hearts
- 18. comedy sketch
- 19. Scan Tech AI Systems (initials)
- 20. labrador retriever
- 22. Climbing equipment
- 27. fuss
- 29. Portuguese beans
- 30. fuel
- 31. suffix
- 32. warning
- 33. fragrance
- 35. Affordable Care Act
- 36. \_\_\_\_\_ Chick (Sea Bird Baby)
- 38. vitamin
- 39. Rama Krishna (initials)
- 40. \_\_\_\_\_ Myers (Baseball Player)
- 41. Public Relations
- 42. \_\_\_ Calf
- 43. African cat babies
- 48. Drop of thick liquid.
- 49. \_\_\_\_\_ Shakespeare
- 50. garment part
- 51. \_\_\_ demand
- 52. Fears of looking bad.
- 54. LED outdoor lighting
- 55. Roentgenium (chemical)
- 56. Request to attend.
- 58. Mt \_\_\_\_\_, Antarctica
- 59. cable television network
- 61. \_\_\_\_\_ calf (largest land animal)
- 63. Reticulated Giraffe (abbrev) calf
- 64. drink slowly
- 65. creative talent

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12
13				14					15				
16								17					
18								19					
		20		21	22	23					24	25	26
27	28			29							30		
31				32					33	34			
35				36				37					38
39			40					41			42	43	
	44	45				46	47			48			
49									50				
51			52				53		54				
55			56					57		58			
59		60				61			62				
		63				64			65				

**Down**

- 1. light gray
- 2. Piggy sound
- 3. Raise livestock board
- 4. molar
- 5. fish
- 6. Austria (abbrev.)
- 7. Lump Sum
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_ a pancake
- 9. painting technique
- 10. food scrap
- 11. Not Under Arrest (initials)
- 12. RSVP Option
- 14. Sun God
- 15. boat-shaped bowl
- 21. \_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ (I believe)
- 22. Hump mammal babies

**Down**

- 23. baking chamber
- 24. bathroom
- 25. point
- 26. \_\_\_\_\_ Cub (Grizzly)
- 27. Not close
- 28. Water Bird babies
- 33. oxygen
- 34. Registered Nurse
- 37. Mail Carrier
- 37. The Book of \_\_\_\_\_
- 40. eating greedily
- 42. \_\_\_\_\_ Tern
- 43. One who loves.
- 45. U.S. state abbrev.
- 46. belly button
- 47. Alphabet letter
- 48. Indonesian Park Ride

**Down**

- 49. \_\_\_\_\_ Fox Terrier
- 50. \_\_\_\_\_ Bernard
- 53. bench workout exercise
- 57. Electrophysiology (acronym)
- 60. Public Relations
- 62. Laughter

Puzzle by J. Pratt  
4.14.26

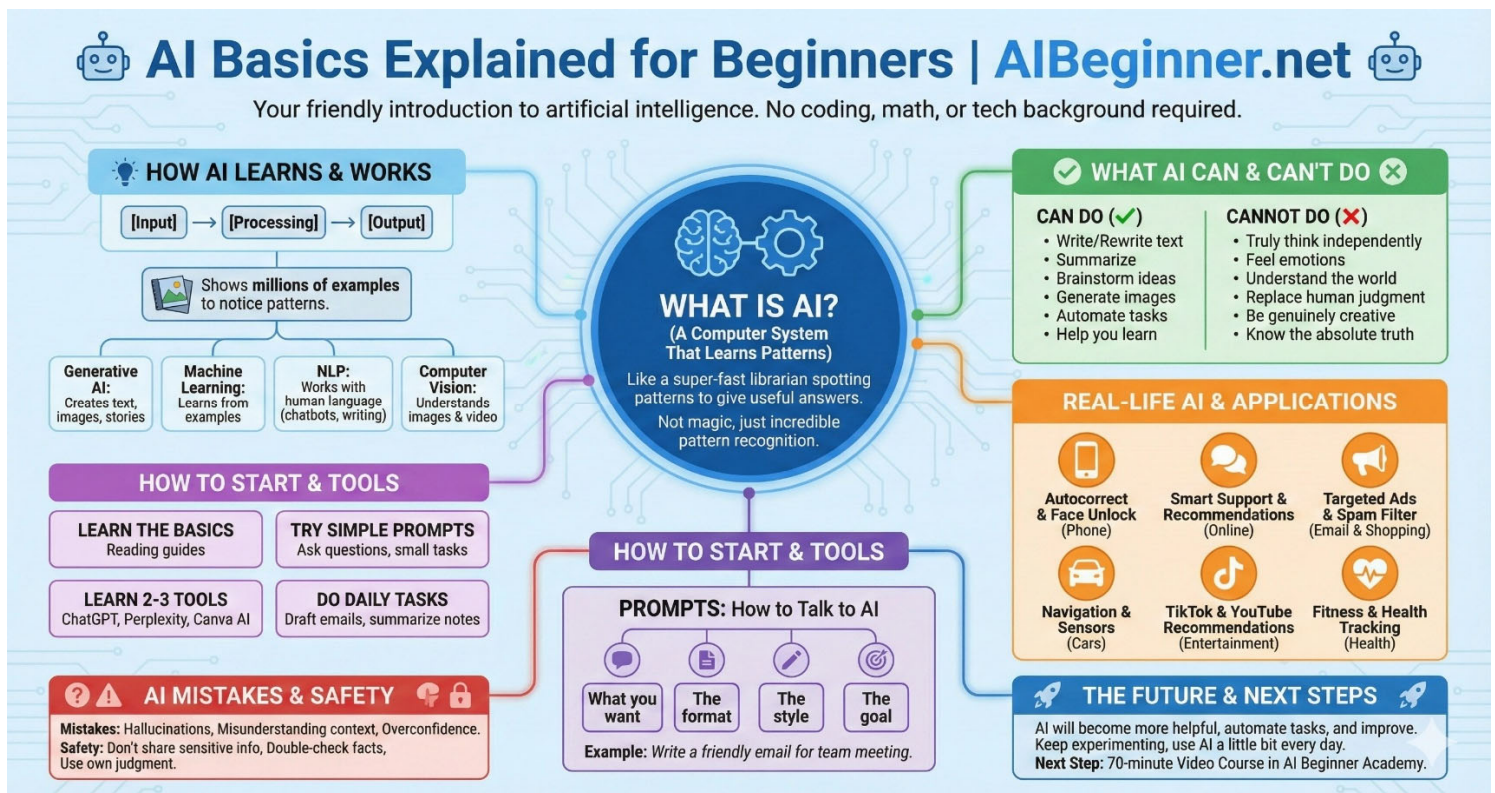
**[Answers: Page \_\_\_]**

# Artificial Intelligence

## Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Humans

We must choose wisely. We must design intentionally. And we must keep humans at the center of this revolution. Because the real breakthrough isn't building machines that think like us. It's building a future that brings out the best in us.

--Marc Benioff, Chair & CEO of Salesforce and Owner and Co-Chair of TIME. [TIME Sept 8, 2025 article, "The agentic age: a new frontier for AI and humans."



<https://aibeginner.net/beginners-guide-to-ai>

# UW Faith Reading Program

The Reading Program is a cherished tradition that brings together members to explore, share and discuss books.

There's something for everyone—the Reading Program is available for:

- Adults, youth, and children
- Enlightening subjects in diverse genres, including:
  - Education for Mission
  - Leadership Development
  - Nurturing for Community
  - Social Action
  - Spiritual Growth

[response](#) magazine and the Faith Talks [podcast](#) are part of the Reading Program.

- Reading Program [Reporting Form](#)
- View [previous Reading Program catalogs](#)
- [Suggest a book](#)
- [Reading Program book list](#)
- If you are planning to purchase books, please consider buying at [bookshop.org/shop/uwfaith](https://bookshop.org/shop/uwfaith) to earn 10 percent back for United Women in Faith.

Also, visit GNJUW Faith website at <https://gnjuwfaith.org/NEWS> for details on the 2021-2026 UW Faith Reading Program Resources **book titles and resources**.



## GNJ UWFaith Calendar of Events 2026

- January 10**      **Conference Leadership Development Event: 9 am - 12:00 pm**  
**Leadership Team Meeting, 12-2pm, via Zoom**  
**RSVP** to [holly.cyrus@faa.gov](mailto:holly.cyrus@faa.gov) by Jan. 9<sup>th</sup>.
- April 11**      **GNJUMW Annual Spring Meeting – 9:00-2:00 pm**  
**Central United Methodist Church, 3 Marvin Ave, Linwood, NJ 08221**  
**RSVP** to [holly.cyrus@faa.gov](mailto:holly.cyrus@faa.gov) by April 9<sup>th</sup>.
- May 15 – May 17**      **UWFaith Assembly in 2026 – “Dream it, Believe it, Do it!”**  
**Indiana Convention Center, Halls A, B, and C.**  
100 S. Capitol Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46225  
<https://uwfaith.org/blog/2025/united-women-in-faith-assembly-2026/>
- June 6**      **Leadership Team Meeting**  
Need location. Gather at 9:30 a.m. Meeting from 10 a.m. to Noon.  
**RSVP** to [holly.cyrus@faa.gov](mailto:holly.cyrus@faa.gov) by June 6<sup>th</sup>.
- July 17-19**      **Mission “u” Three Day School – “Experiencing Emmanuel.”**  
Centenary University, 400 Jefferson St., Hackettstown, NJ 07840  
<https://uwfaith.org/events/mission-u/>.
- July 23**      **South Seaville Camp Meeting**  
4<sup>th</sup> Thursday Women’s Day; Tabernacle, South Seaville, NJ
- August 1**      **Treasurer’s Meeting 9:30-11:30, Leadership Team Meeting 12-2**  
Need location.  
For information, contact: [holly.cycrus@faa.gov](mailto:holly.cycrus@faa.gov).
- October 17**      **GNJUMW Annual Fall Meeting, 9 am-2 pm**  
Mission Resource Center, 205 Jumping Brook Road, Neptune, NJ 07753  
**RSVP** to [holly.cyrus@faa.gov](mailto:holly.cyrus@faa.gov) by October 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Upcoming Events**      **Assembly in 2026** in Indianapolis, IN May 15-17, 2026. Above.

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## **Voices of Purpose**

### **2026 Newsletter Deadlines & Distribution**

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<b>Newsletter Issue</b>	<b>Deadline for Articles</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
Spring 2026 (January – March)	April 3, 2026	April 6, 2026
Summer 2026 (April – June)	July 3, 2026	July 6, 2026
Fall 2026 (July – September)	October 5, 2026	October 9, 2026
Winter 2026 (October – December)	January 4, 2027	January 8, 2027

Visit GNJUWF website for previous published newsletters: [www.gnjuwfaith.org/news](http://www.gnjuwfaith.org/news).



The Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith (GNJUWFaith) newsletter **Voices of Purpose** is a quarterly bulletin published and distributed to bring news and events of united women in faith and the religious services they embrace. Our “voices” can be heard in every corner of society from science and medicine to the economy, politics, and race, always through God’s grace.

We invite you to share your knowledge, experiences, and opinions with our readers. Don’t worry about writing skills because we have volunteer editors who would love the challenge. Please visit our website contact page to submit your presentation. We await your call!

[www.gnjuwfaith.org](http://www.gnjuwfaith.org)

# Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith

## LEADERSHIP TEAM 2025

**PRESIDENT**

Holly Cyrus ('24)

**VPRES/PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

Virgil Williams ('28)

**SECRETARY**

Linda Wilson (27)

**TREASURER**

Jill Morrow ('26)

**SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT ADVISOR**

Agnes Bockari ('28)

**Membership, Nurture and  
OUTREACH CHAIR**

Betty Sayner ('28)

**CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTIONS**

**ADVOCATE**

Open

**PROGRAM RESOURCES**

Open

**STANDING RULES CHAIR**

Grace Rapp

**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Lou Hyson ('27)

**COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR**

Joyce Pratt ('27)

**NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES REP.**

Cynthia Wilks-Mosely

**LGBTQ Representative**

Open

GNJUWF Website: [www.gnjuwfaith.org](http://www.gnjuwfaith.org)

### **COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS**

**NOMINATIONS CHAIR**

Open

**CLASS OF 2025**

Kathy Schulz

**CLASS OF 2026**

Rosa Williams

**CLASS OF 2027**

Jill Morrow

**CLASS OF 2027**

Deborah McDermott

**CLASS OF 2028**

Rebecca C. Grant

**CLASS OF 2028**

Marilyn Powell

**CLASS OF 2028**

Open

### **APPOINTED**

**CHARTER FOR RACIAL JUSTICE**

**Chair:** Sue Zahorbenski

**Members:** Leslie Bivins, Joyce Pratt  
Carolyn Pendleton, Millie Grey  
Mary Bland, Barbara Miller

**Legacy Fund Committee**

**Chair:** Marilyn Powell

**Members:** Open

(continued on page 31)

# LEADERSHIP TEAM – 2024-2025

(continued from page 30)

## DISTRICT PRESIDENTS

### COASTAL PLAINS

#### CAPE ATLANTIC

Lou Hyson ('28)

#### CENTRAL

Debbie Campion ('25)

#### DELAWARE BAY

Staci Sheetz ('25)

### METRO HIGHLANDS

#### MEADOWLANDS

Tracy Carroll ('25)

Tia Swanson ('25)

#### RARITAN SHORE

OPEN

#### SKYLANDS

Elizabeth (Liz) Steen ('26)

## ELECTED BY OTHER GROUPS

#### KOREAN NETWORK PRESIDENT

Kyungmee Kim

#### KOREAN LANGUAGE COORDINATOR

OPEN

#### KOREAN LANGUAGE

OPEN

#### HISPANIC NETWORK PRESIDENT

OPEN

#### HISPANIC LANGUAGE COORDINATOR

OPEN

#### CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

Sara Joslin

## OTHER LEADERSHIP TEAMS

#### IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Susan Zahorbenski

#### DEAN MISSION "U"

Rev. Elizabeth Vaneekhoven (25)

#### ASSISTANT DEAN MISSION "U"

Rev. Bernadette Cataline

#### UMW NE JURISDICTION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Governance Committee for National UWFaith

Yvonne Bouknight

#### UMW NE JURISDICTION LEADERSHIP TEAM

Vice-President

Susan Zahorbenski

#### UMW NATIONAL DIRECTOR/SECRETARY

CEO

Sally Vonner

#### GNJUMC PRESIDING BISHOP

Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi

GNJ CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH WEBSITE

[www.gnjuwfaith.org](http://www.gnjuwfaith.org)

Revised: 8/2/25

# Social Action Resources

## Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith Website

[www.gnjumw.org](http://www.gnjumw.org).

## National Human Trafficking Prevention Month

[www.state.gov/national-human-trafficking-prevention-month/](http://www.state.gov/national-human-trafficking-prevention-month/)

## New Jersey Assembly Bills Pending

<https://legiscan.com/NJ/pending/ssembly-state-local-government-committee/id/3085>.

## New Jersey Legislature

List of all New Jersey legislators in alphabetical order showing, party, house, and district. Legislators can also be found by municipality/city. Click on "Members" and then "Legislative Roster."

<https://njleg.state.nj.us/legislative-roster>.

## United States House of Representatives

Directory of U.S. Representatives (also referred to as congressmen or congresswomen) showing district name, party office, phone, and committee assignment. <https://www.house.gov/representatives>.

## United States Senate

Listing of all U.S. senators alphabetically by name, showing state, party, office room, and phone.

<https://www.senate.gov/senators/>.

## United Women in Faith Website

<https://uwfaith.org>.

## United States Congress

Meeting sessions and links for House of Representatives and Senate and current bills search.

<https://congress.gov>.

G	O	A	T		C	A	L	F		S	O	N	Y
R	I	G	O	R	O	U	S	L	Y	T	R	U	E
I	N	R	O	A	D	S		A	O	R	T	A	S
S	K	I	T					S	T	A	I		
		C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E	L	A	B
A	D	O		F	A	V	A	S			O	I	L
F	U	L		O	M	E	N		A	R	O	M	A
A	C	A		P	E	N	G	U	I	N			C
R	K		W	I	L			P	R		E	L	K
	L	I	O	N	C	U	B	S		B	L	O	B
W	I	L	L	I	A	M			S	L	E	V	E
I	N		F	O	L	B	S		T	I	G	E	A
R	G		I	N	V	I	T	E		T	A	R	R
E	S	P	N		E	L	E	P	H	A	N	T	
		R	G		S	I	P		A	R	T		

**Answers to  
ANIMAL KINGDOM BABIES  
(page 25)**