



Greater New Jersey (GNJ) Conference United Methodist Women (UMW)

January 24, 2021

Dear Friends,

After 4 years of serving as your GNJUMW President, it is with great joy and anticipation that I now figuratively turn over this position to your newly elected president, Susan Zahorbenski!

We went through a tumultuous 4 years, one in which the cause of truth and social justice and even the meaning of being a Christian were called into question, but at every turn you sought to further the purpose of United Methodist Women in terms of the mission initiatives including Ending Mass Incarceration of People of Color and Interrupting the School to Prison Pipeline, Creating Climate Justice, supporting Maternal and Child Health Care and ending Immigration Detentions! We protested the lockup of Immigrants at the Elizabeth Detention Center. We attended many wonderful Mission u retreats at Georgian Court University learning about the Equal Justice Initiative, Climate Justice and participating in spiritual studies! And we watched some of our most loyal and faithful leaders, including Susan Miller and June McCullough, pass from this world to God's kingdom, leaving us saddened but grateful for their lives and their mentorship! We witnessed our GNJUM Conference rise to the occasion at many May Wildwood conferences and support our call for school desegregation in New Jersey's public school and for all youth to be supported in an effort to end suicide among teens and young adults, especially those LGBTQ and A youth! In 2019 we attended the GNJUM Conference and supported the Black Lives Matter resolution! We were involved in all of this legislation either as co-sponsors or primary initiators, and I am so proud!

We celebrated the 150th birthday of the founding of United Methodist Women in 1869 in Boston, Massachusetts! Millie Grey, Holly Cyrus and myself were participants in the March 2019 celebration in Boston where the New England Conference reenacted the cold, stormy night when 8 women gathered to launch the Women's Foreign Missionary Society (what is now the United Methodist Women) by raising the money and then choosing and sending two missionaries to India, one woman doctor (Dr. Clara Swain) to treat women and one woman teacher (Isabella Thoburn) to found schools for girls! Both of these populations had previously had no medical care or education!

Many of you were new to the positions of leadership when you started, but you grew into your roles and also mentored other women, making your marks on your districts, your local units and your conference! You brought gifts and skills that when added together were no match for any problem or situation, and you prevailed! The road to just treatment for all is a long road, but with the supportive fellowship and the leadership of our Lord Jesus Christ, I have seen advancement in the direction of God's creation here on earth, "as it is in heaven."

This past year has been one of crises: many have lost loved ones to drug addiction, some have died of Covid-19, some have been shot during racial unrest and gun violence, many species of plants and animals became extinct or on the verge of extinction, polarization took over the nation, and the percentage of persons not being able to provide food and housing for themselves grew at alarming rates! United Methodist Women have been there at every turn, working food banks, wearing masks, trying to preserve the environment, and campaigning for truth in politics and democratic elections. But the cause where I think we as United Methodist Women of Greater New Jersey really are shining a light on truth is our Charter for Racial Justice series of ongoing programs called "Third Saturday Conversations on Race," the third Saturday of the month (12-1 pm) on understanding and combating racial injustice! From the "History of Slavery/Racism in America" with Dr. Lillie Edwards June 18, 2020 to the much anticipated:

February 20, 2021 program "The School to Prison Pipeline" with Rev. Brenda Wheeler-Ehlers and Rev. Vanessa Wilson, JD

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYsd-uhrDliGtOP-5WDMFeI5AqngUHE72jA>

We have tried to reach out within our conference and beyond to create a fellowship of support and understanding! Shoutouts go to the whole team, including:

Millie Grey, Yvonne Bouknight, Sherri Shumate, Carolyn Pendleton, Rosa Williams, Carol Bloch, Rosa Williams, Virgil Williams, Barbara McFarquhar, Barbara McShane, Pat Schutz, Susan Zahorbenski, Choong-Hee Lee, Pat Bodden, Joyce Pratt, Lesley Koengetter, Leslie Bivins, Marilyn Powell, myself and co-chair Esther Canty-Barnes, Esq.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve, thank you for your support and your leadership and I look forward to continued fellowship and marching to Zion with all of my sisters in Christ in the days and weeks and months and years to come, as long as God has given us here on his earth!

Amen, Amen and Thanks be to God!!

Blessings to you and all that you do,

Kathy Schulz GNJ United Methodist Women President 2016-2019