

Voices of Purpose

September 2026

Quarterly Newsletter of the Greater New Jersey United Women

President's Message



In Memory of Michael Thomas Landis

Michael Landis started as a Neighborhood Center volunteer and board member in 1988. He became the Executive Director in 2012. Under Mike's leadership the Neighborhood Center grew its mission and relevance in making a positive difference in the lives of children, teenagers, and the community.

Mike came to many United Women In Faith Teas to help raise money for The Neighborhood Center and let our ladies know how much the Center helped children and families in need in the Camden, NJ area.

It is with a very heavy heart that we learned that he passed away on September 15, 2026 at the age of 65.

Please be generous with your donations this year to the Neighborhood Center as they will need a great deal of help in the days ahead since they have lost their leader.

Holly Cyrus
GNJUWFaith President.

Issue Highlights

- *Respect for all
Ages*
- *UWFaith Grant
Completed*
- *AI Predictions*
- *The Hunger Cycle*
- *Protect the Vote*
- *Healing with
Plants*
- *Ageism
Revolution*
- *Climate Justice*



United
Women
in Faith

September 2026

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Editor: Joyce Pratt
GNJUWFaith Communications Coordinator



United
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in Faith

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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.



United
Women
in Faith



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Michael Thomas Landis

Director of
The Neighborhood Center in Camden, NJ

The Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith
honor

Mike's legacy and pray for his family, friends,
and all who were impacted by his many
years of service.



Advocacy on the Hill Day

“Interrupt the School-to-Prison Pipeline”

On September 23 2026, thanks to many of you oft-times and ten of you on this date, the United Women in Faith (UWFaith) grant to “Interrupt the School-to Prison Pipeline” was completed under GNJUWFaith’s Advocacy on the Hill Day. We experienced many successes and only one regret.

Successes

Thanks to our GNJUWFaith President Holly Cyrus, our travel from New Jersey to Washington, D.C. was safe, timely, and enjoyable. Holly arranged the logistics - transportation, a 15-seater mini-van, two pick-up locations -- and delivered us in front of the Capitol building where we waited for her to park and return. We had an appointment with Senator Andy Kim’s office staff and visited Senator Cory Booker’s office later.

Our first stop was entrance to the Senate Hearings for that day. Alas, only three of our 100 Senators appeared, but their presentations were not related to our issues. After about an hour, we left and attempted to enter a few Committee meetings to seek our Senators and instead ran into Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont who greeted us warmly and allowed group cell pictures (see below). Our attendees, listed below, were professional and excited for this experience and many in the audience smiled in acknowledgement.

Next, after lunch, we visited Senator Kim’s office and were professionally greeted and escorted to their conference room. I began the introductions and reported our mission to encourage a U.S. Senator to speak on behalf of the United Women in Faith’s 500,000 U.S. membership to pursue approval of Senate bills S.1338 and S.3214 to protect innocent school children from incarceration as a disciplinary action. I then introduced Emily Jones who introduced Andrea Aikins to share her experiences as a public-school Principle, and then our President Holly Cyrus and other attendees continued until our time was spent.

Our final stop was Senator Booker’s office. I explained to the staff that although we did not have an appointment, we had just left Senator Kim’s office and were eager to visit and thank Senator Booker’s staff for assisting us in achieving this day. MacKenzie Belling and Zaire Carter, Senator Booker’s Director of Southern NJ Office and Project Specialist in the Newark Office, advised us to create the Advocacy on the Hill Day and attended our Zoom meeting, respectively. Senator Booker’s team was receptive, professional, and took electronic notes for the Senator. We explained our mission to encourage Senator Booker to speak at a full Senate hearing about his bill (S.1338) and announce that the United Women in Faith were advocating for its passage. Event photos are shared below!

Regrets

The majority of our U.S. Senators were not in attendance to be told of United Women in Faith’s efforts to reduce mass incarceration in the United States. But there’s still time! Our final report is not due until February 2027!

Advocacy on the Hill Day

“Interrupt the School-to-Prison Pipeline”

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Team Member Attendees

I am proud to have worked with and experienced our September 23, 2026 Senate Visit at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. with all of you who assisted and the following who also joined me on this grant venture. **Thanks ever so much!**

Andrea Aikens-Turner, Member
GNJUWFaith Hill Day Committee
Yvonne Bouknight, National
UWFaith Governance Committee
Holly Cyrus, President GNJUWFaith
Emily Jones, UWFaith Director of
Racial Justice
Sara Joslin, Past President
Church Women United in NJ

Louise Neblett, Attendee & Member of
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
Carolyn Pendleton, Chair GNJUWFaith
Charter for Racial Justice
Marilyn Powell, UWFaith Legacy Fund
Joyce Pratt, GNJUWFaith
Communications Coordinator
Sue Zahorbenski, UWFaith VP
NE Jurisdiction Leadership Team

A Parable of Truth and Lie

In the nineteenth century the French painter Jean-Léon Gérôme offered the world a story that sounds less like a parable and more like a news summary.

Truth and Lie met one day beside a well. Lie said to Truth “Today is a wonderful day. And the water in the well is very nice. Let’s take a bath together.” Truth was suspicious but tested the water and found it pleasant. They both dis-robed and jumped in. After a few moments of delightful bathing and conversation, Lie climbed out of the well first, gathered up Truth’s clothes, and ran.

Truth came out of the well furious and ran all over searching for the stolen clothes. But the World, seeing Truth naked, turned its face away in contempt. Ashamed and rejected, Truth retreated to the bottom of the well and disappeared.

And since that day, wrote Gérôme, the Lie has traveled the world dressed in the clothes of Truth, satisfying the needs of society, because the World harbors no wish to meet the naked Truth.

Resources: Truth & Lie by Leslie N. Pollard, Ph.D., D.Min., MBA. The Truth and the Lie posted on August 30, 2019 by Sandy Dell, RScP. The Naked Truth, <https://spiritualtoolsforhungrysouls.com/the-truth-and-the-lie/>. Jean-Léon Gérôme painting Truth Coming Out of Her Well, Paris, France 1896. Ephesians 4:25.



*Help Stop the School to
Prison Pipeline*



GNJ Mission Resource Center
205 Jumping Brook Road
Neptune Twp, NJ 07753
732-359-1000

Agenda

9:30am Breakfast
10:00am Program Start
11:45am Lunch (\$15 *register*)
12:30pm Breakout Sessions (See below)
1:30pm Annual Business Meeting
2:30pm End of Meeting

Panelists for Presenter

Staci Scheetz
Esther Canty-Barnes
Rev. Vanessa Wilson

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Greater New Jersey Fall Annual Meeting

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Breakout Sessions

Youth Table with Guest

Postcard Table

Music from Other Cultures

Resources for the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Ingathering

Camden Neighborhood Center – School & Art Supplies

Offering

Community Food Bank of New Jersey (<https://cfbnj.org>)

Registration* Questions

holly.cyrus@faa.gov, 609-226-5337



*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called
Children of God.*

Matthew 5:9

Legislation for Climate Justice

We have a moral responsibility as a nation and as a sacred task as people of faith, to care for our climate and the climate resiliency of our communities and to leave a safe and thriving world for future generations. That's why we need more legislation advancing climate justice that will deliver protections and justice for impacted communities, jobs, climate action, and clean energy.

In our petition to support clean air, we ask our government leaders to increase clean, 100% renewable, and just energy infrastructure with equitable considerations that are good for people and creation. [<https://win.newmode.net/unitedwomeninfaith/legislationforclimatejustice>]

We advocate for clean, renewable, and just energy infrastructure, the highest environmental standards by regulatory agencies and ambitious climate addressing policies including:

S.720 and H.R.1553 - Empowering and enforcing environmental Justice Act of 2025.

Establishes a DOJ Office of Environmental Justice and funds grants for environmental laws in overburdened communities.

S.Res.36 and H.Res.68 - Paris Agreement Resolutions.

Disapproves of U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and affirms continued U.S. commitment to its climate goals.

S.351 and H.R. 2145 - STEWARD Act of 2025.

Creates an EPA grant program to expand recycling access in underserved communities and requires national reporting on recycling infrastructure.

S.347 and H.R.6432 – Brownfields Reauthorization Act of 2025.

Reauthorizes the EPA Brownfields Program through FY2030 and doubles cleanup grants to \$1 million per site.

S.25 – Polluters ay Climate Fund Act of 2025.

Taxes fossil fuel emissions to create a climate fund, directing 4% of proceeds to environmental justice communities.

S.3324 – FERC Greenhouse Gas and Environmental Justice Policy Act of 2025.

Requires FERC to assess and mitigate climate and environmental justice impacts before approving natural gas projects.

H.R.4515 – Climate Change Health Protection and Promotion Act of 2025.

Directs HHS to create a national plan protecting health care workers and underserved communities from climate-related health impacts.

H.R.2997 – Green Climate Fund Authorization Act of 2025.

Authorizes \$4 billion annually for U.S. contributions to the international Green Climate Fund for FY2026-2027.

For more information, attend CAD UWFaith's Annual Fall Meeting on October 24, 2026 for *Climate & Environmental Justice* with Speaker Susan Zahorbenki. See **District News** below.

Hunger vs Food Insecurity

What Can We Do?

Hunger is the physical feeling of discomfort, weakness, or pain caused by not consuming enough food. Food insecurity is a household-level socioeconomic condition typical of poverty, unemployment, low income, lack of affordable housing, or limited access to health care. It's a world-wide phenomenon.

Food insecurity reflects uncertainty about future access to food. It can lead to hunger, but hunger does not cause food insecurity. Understanding the distinction is crucial for designing effective remedies.

David Beasley, Executive Director of the U.N. World Food Program (WFP), in his TIME December 8, 2025 article, “The real reason we fail to feed those in need” *is because decisionmakers profit from short-term solutions at the cost of addressing the root causes of inequality and food insecurity*. Beasley shares that food insecurity drives migration, fuels conflict and erodes democracy. That’s how you get through to lawmakers and taxpayers. He advises young people who will soon be at the wheel to be careful and stay hopeful. Don’t tear down the systems that are reaching the 90% goal; fix them.

Breaking the “hunger cycle” requires focus on addressing root causes and improving access to nutritious food – increase food access, improve food systems, address inequities, and empower communities. It’s not just about feeding people today, it’s about restoring health, economic stability, and long-term self-sufficiency.
<https://www.breakingthehungercycle.net/>.

According to USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture), 13.0% of New Jersey residents lived in food-insecure households in 2024 - over 1 million people including 300,000 children. County rates ranged from 7.2% in Hunterdon to 19.1% in Hudson.

What can we do for New Jersey? We can refer individuals and groups to New Jersey’s two state programs to assist food insecurity and hunger:

SNAP – NJ’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/njsnap/apply/ways/> and

WIC – N.J’s Women, Infants, and Children Program
<https://www.njwiconline.org/html/general-information.cfm>.

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Hunger vs Food Insecurity – *What Can We Do?*

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Another consideration is local community food distribution programs to provide critical nutrition, stability, and social support to vulnerable populations. Partnering with local agencies, schools, farmers, and nonprofits can respond to crises and immediate food needs while fostering community strength. Consider setting up a mini-shopping event in a church, school, or community center monthly where residents can enter, take a shopping bag, select needed foods, and exit at no cost. Your local partners and national grant donors would listen to such a proposal.

And add a resource table of flyers and pamphlets of information for attendees or create webinars regarding long-term self-sufficiency solutions. A few resources to assist you are: Feeding American, No Kid Hungary, Doctors Without Borders-USA, and Nourishing Neighbors.

We wish you success!

Map the Meal Gap's Estimates of Food Insecurity Rate, by New Jersey County, by Race and Ethnicity, 2023 compared to 2019											
County	Black Population			Latino Population			White Population			Disparity in rate of 2023 food insecurity*	
	2020	2023	Percent Change	2020	2023	Percent Change	2020	2023	Percent Change	Black/ White Disparity	Latino/ White Disparity
Atlantic	21%	27%	29%	21%	26%	24%	5%	9%	80%	3.0	2.9
Bergen	12%	20%	67%	14%	18%	29%	3%	7%	133%	2.9	2.6
Burlington	10%	16%	60%	16%	18%	13%	3%	7%	133%	2.3	2.6
Camden	17%	23%	35%	21%	26%	24%	4%	8%	100%	2.9	3.3
Cape May	18%	27%	50%	20%	22%	10%	5%	8%	60%	3.4	2.8
Cumberland	20%	26%	30%	20%	24%	20%	6%	10%	67%	2.6	2.4
Essex	22%	29%	32%	20%	25%	25%	4%	8%	100%	3.6	3.1
Gloucester	13%	20%	54%	16%	20%	25%	3%	7%	133%	2.9	2.9
Hudson	19%	27%	42%	19%	24%	26%	7%	10%	43%	2.7	2.4
Hunterdon	11%	10%	-9%	13%	14%	8%	1%	5%	400%	2.0	2.8
Mercer	19%	25%	32%	18%	21%	17%	3%	8%	167%	3.1	2.6
Middlesex	12%	21%	75%	17%	21%	24%	4%	8%	100%	2.6	2.6
Monmouth	15%	22%	47%	16%	17%	6%	2%	6%	200%	3.7	2.8
Morris	13%	20%	54%	13%	17%	31%	2%	6%	200%	3.3	2.8
Ocean	13%	20%	54%	15%	20%	33%	5%	9%	80%	2.2	2.2
Passaic	20%	28%	40%	19%	23%	21%	4%	8%	100%	3.5	2.9
Salem	22%	29%	32%	24%	26%	8%	5%	9%	80%	3.2	2.9
Somerset	9%	16%	78%	14%	17%	21%	1%	5%	400%	3.2	3.4
Sussex	7%	10%	43%	13%	15%	15%	3%	6%	100%	1.7	2.5
Union	14%	20%	43%	16%	20%	25%	3%	6%	100%	3.3	3.3
Warren	14%	19%	36%	15%	16%	7%	4%	8%	100%	2.4	2.0
New Jersey	17%	24%	41%	17%	22%	29%	3%	7%	133%	3.4	3.1

*This is the number of times that the food insecurity rate is for the Black and Hispanic populations compared to white populations in the same geography. E.g., 'The rate of food insecurity for Black individuals in New Jersey is 3.4 times the rate for white individuals. This number is calculated by dividing the food insecurity rate for Black and Hispanic populations by the food insecurity rate for white populations.

AI 2026 Predictions

Excerpts of 5 Predictions for AI in 2026.

"The technology is poised for integration into everyday experience."

by Harry Booth and Tharin Pillay. TIME

Last year, AI companies struck multibillion-dollar deals to build out AI infrastructure. In 2026, as this new computing power starts coming online, experts say we'll begin to see whether that investment pays off. The 5 predictions are:

<u>Synopsis</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Status</u>
1. Advancing Science	AI discovers on its own.	AI assists human researchers.
2. AI Shops for You	AI facilitated shopping reshaping consumer behavior and offering a new revenue stream online.	Groundwork has already been laid.
3. Companions Go Mainstream	People develop real and meaningful relationships with technologies using one AI for productivity and another for emotional connection.	Technology is becoming better understood.
4. More Political Attention	AI will play a larger role on the world stage: -AI a top-five issue in the Midterm elections. -Technology will remain a bipartisan issue.	Technology is evolving.
5. Powering Cyberattacks	AI will become an "Iron Suit" for cybersecurity to find and exploit previously unknown software vulnerabilities.	In progress.

###

The Golden Years Are Getting an Upgrade

The New Old Age by Alice Parker

TIME's senior health correspondent Alice Parker wrote "*The New Old Age*" in January 2026, a feature exploring how the traditional American life arc is becoming obsolete as life expectancy rises globally.

Parker shares that U.S. life expectancy has jumped from 68 years in 1950 to 79 years today, meaning about 60 million Americans are now 65 or older. Globally, 2.1 billion people (about 1 in 5) are projected to be 60 or older by 2050, with Japan already having a third of its population in that age group. This demographic shift is driven by both longer lifespans and plummeting birth rates.

Columbia University's John Rowe, cited by Parker, warns that education, work, and retirement systems are not designed for a population with such an extended age structure, and a societal "re-engineering" is needed.

Parker highlights several solutions: lifelong learning, mentorship and intergenerational programs, flexible work models, and addressing loneliness and health costs.

She frames seniors not as a burden but as untapped sources of talent, experience, and social glue. Parker underscores that the "new old age" demands rethinking how we live, work, and age. <https://time.com/collections/the-age-of-longevity/thenew-old-age>.

108-Year-Old Woman Still Drives

At 108 years old, Susan Young Browne of Dover, Delaware, continues to drive her blue Subaru, live independently in her own home, and remain active in her community. She recently renewed her driver's license until 2033 when she will be 115.



Born April 24, 1918 in Lincoln, Delaware, Browne grew up on a farm without running water or electricity, attending a segregated elementary school where she was inspired to become a teacher. She earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Delaware University in 1945, becoming the university's oldest living alumna. She taught for 30 years, starting in a one-room schoolhouse, and later helped her first husband run a bus business.

Browne says driving is essential for her independence, and she has been driving for over 80 years. She credits her longevity to regular exercise and a structured daily routine of morning exercise, workouts, mindfulness, and social life.

Browne is known for her humor, independence, and strong family ties.

[CoPilot 8.9.26]

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The Golden Years Are Getting An Upgrade

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U.S. Efforts to Support Aging

The United States has a multi-agency, multi-sector approach to addressing the needs of older adults, focusing on healthy aging, financial security, access to care, and community support.

The U.S. approach combines research-driven health promotion (NIA), community-based support and advocacy (NCOA), interagency planning (National Plan on Aging), and policy and service coordination (Department of Health Human Services (HHS)). Together, these efforts aim to help older adults live longer, healthier, and more secure lives. [CoPilot 7.31.26]

Human Perception Changes with Age

Ageism-discrimination against older people due to negative stereotypes-is a persistent social prejudice. It can lead to reduced opportunities, poorer healthcare access, and lower life satisfaction. Research shows that younger people often express stronger explicit preferences for other young adults, while older adults may internalize negative stereotypes about aging, which can harm their mental and physical health.

While ageism is still “the last socially acceptable prejudice” in many contexts, awareness and advocacy have grown. However, it persists in healthcare, employment, and social institutions. The challenge now is to move beyond recognizing ageism to actively dismantling it through policy, education, and cultural change. [CoPilot 8.6.26]

The Bible Emphasizes Respect for All Ages

The teachings of the Bible consistently promote respect for individuals of all ages, condemning ageism and encouraging a culture of honor and learning across generations.

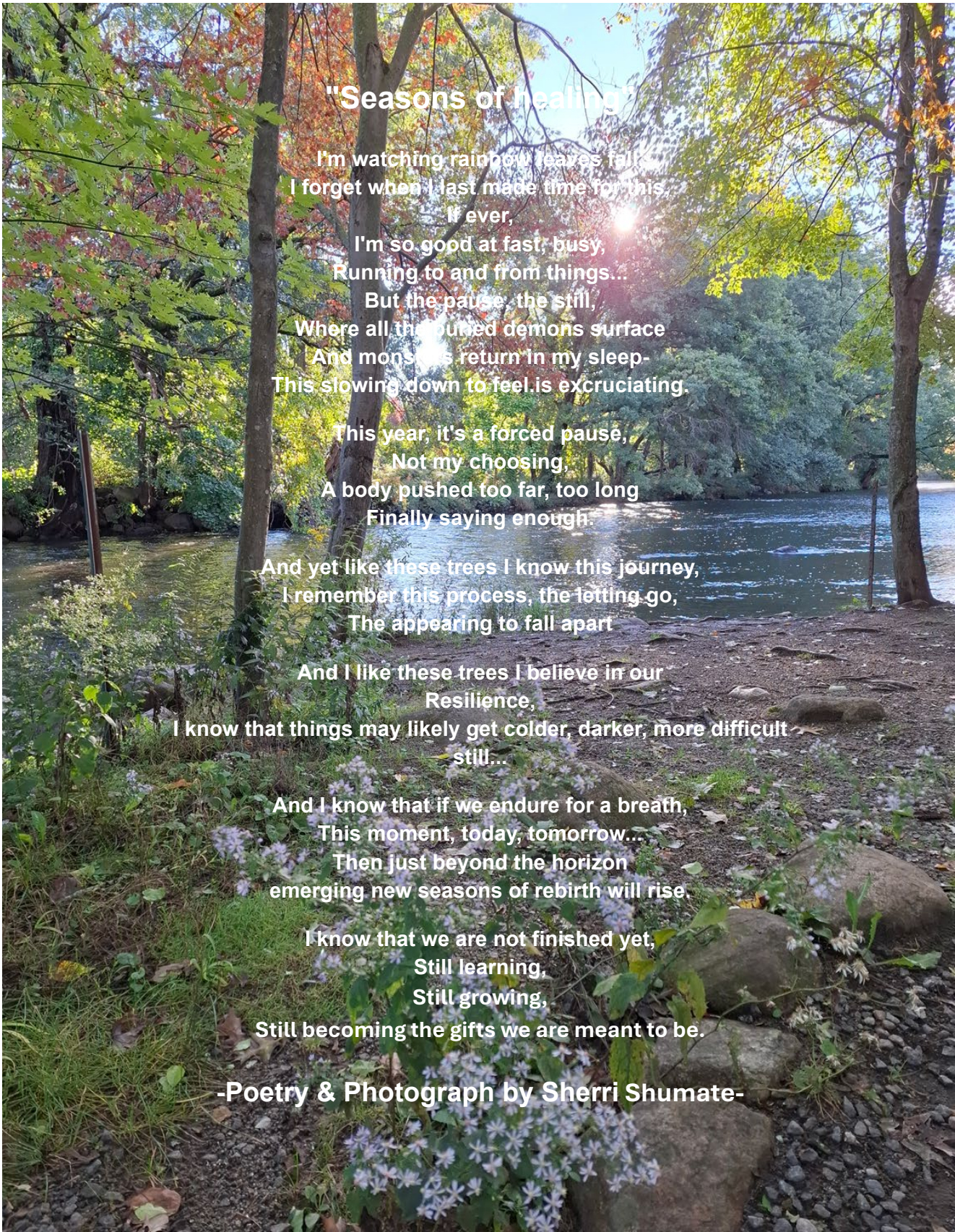
Respect for the Elderly (Leviticus 19:32)	Youth and Respect (Timothy 4:12)
Value of Wisdom (Proverbs 16:31)	God's Perspective on Aging
Intergenerational Relationships (Titu2:2-6)	(Psalm 91:16)

By valuing the wisdom of the elderly and the potential of the youth, believers can foster a more inclusive and respectful community. [CoPilot .26.26]

*Aging is a beautiful journey filled with wisdom and experiences
that shape who you are.*

*You're not just getting older; you're transforming into a masterpiece,
fully authentic and unapologetic.*

by Nela [<https://www.uncommonquotes.com/inspirational-quotes-about-age/>]



"Seasons of healing"

I'm watching rainbow leaves fall
I forget when I last made time for this
If ever,
I'm so good at fast, busy,
Running to and from things...
But the pause, the still,
Where all the buried demons surface
And monsters return in my sleep-
This slowing down to feel is excruciating.

This year, it's a forced pause,
Not my choosing.
A body pushed too far, too long
Finally saying enough.

And yet like these trees I know this journey,
I remember this process, the letting go,
The appearing to fall apart

And I like these trees I believe in our
Resilience,
I know that things may likely get colder, darker, more difficult
still...

And I know that if we endure for a breath,
This moment, today, tomorrow...
Then just beyond the horizon
emerging new seasons of rebirth will rise.

I know that we are not finished yet,
Still learning,
Still growing,
Still becoming the gifts we are meant to be.

-Poetry & Photograph by Sherri Shumate-



CHURCH WOMEN UNITED-NJ ANNUAL FALL GATHERING



“Fulfilling God’s Promise in Our Communities...”

2 Corinthians 9:8 NIV

Saturday, October 24, 2026 @ 9AM-2:30PM

Cranford Community Center

220 Walnut Street, Cranford, NJ 07016

WORKSHOP

“Women of Faith Confronting the Immigration Crisis.”



HONORING DR. SARA JOSLIN, IMMEDIATE PAST CWU-NJ STATE PRESIDENT

Coleen Williams Lewis, President

Geraldine Nicholas Harvey, Vice President

Continental Breakfast/Light Lunch Served

Please bring non-perishable food items for donation to Cranford Family Care

Registration Donation: \$15.00

Zelle: CWUNJstate@yahoo.com

OR

Mail Registration payable to: Church Women United NJ

Mail to: Janice Watson 10A Van Nostrand Avenue, Jersey City, NJ 07305

Tear here and mail registration

Name:-----Church Affiliation:-----

Mailing Address:-----

Email Address:-----Telephone Number: -----

Date:-----Donation Amount:-----



Plants for Human Health

Scripture affirms that God created plants specifically to nourish and heal humanity, and many biblical herbs—such as aloe, hyssop, myrrh, and frankincense—were used for both physical and symbolic healing, reflecting God’s intentional design in creation [haletestosterone.com]

Several passages establish a coherent creation-theology that plants are not accidental but part of God’s healing plan.

- God gives seed-bearing plants and fruit trees for food. **Genesis 1:29**
- God “makes... plants for people to cultivate.” **Psalms 104:14**
- Trees whose leaves “will be for healing.” **Ezekiel 47:12**
- The tree of life’s leaves are “for the healing of the nations.” **Revelation 22:2**

The Bible explicitly states that God created plants to nourish and heal people, with Psalm 104:14 and Ezekiel 47:12 making that purpose clear. The Bible names over a dozen herbs and trees with documented healing roles. [<https://melissaknorris.com>]

- **Aloe** – Skin care, burns, wound support; used in burial (John 19:39).
- **Hyssop** – Cleansing rituals (Exodus 12:22), respiratory aid.
- **Myrrh** – Antiseptic, analgesic, embalming.
- **Frankincense** – Respiratory support, skin care.
- **Fig** – Poultices for wounds (Isaiah 38:21).
- **Cinnamon, anise, calamus, juniper, mallow, rue, saffron, wormwood** – Various digestive, respiratory, mood, and circulatory benefits

Many Christian and Jewish traditions view using these plants as responsible stewardships of the body and of creation. [<https://haletestosterone.com/blog/physical-stewardship-christian>]

The Bible presents medicinal plants as part of God’s intentional provision for human health, blending practical care with spiritual truth. They are both a testament to creation’s goodness and a call to stewardship, care, and trust in God’s healing work.

Discover the fascinating world of fall herbal medicines for a fulfilling botanical journey. The following **fall plants with medicinal properties** and descriptions of their health benefits are shared to offer a start on your path to natural health nutrients. Some describe creating tea vs pharmacy products. Other plants may also be possible to create as a beverage. Google others or ask your Doctor for instructions.

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Plants for Human Health

(continued from page 19)

8 Fall Plants with Medicinal Properties [CoPilot]

1. **Angelica**, scientifically known as *Angelica archangelica*, is a biennial herb highly regarded for its numerous medicinal properties. It is commonly used to support digestive health by relieving gas, bloating, and gastrointestinal discomfort. Angelica's compounds have been traditionally utilized to **aid respiratory health, particularly in alleviating symptoms of bronchitis.**

2. **Bee Balm**, scientifically *Monarda fistulosa*, offers relief for colds and flu with antibacterial effects. It exhibits antibacterial and antifungal properties and when prepared as a **tea or infusion, offers relief for respiratory issues and digestive discomfort.** Bee Balm also attracts beneficial pollinators like bees and butterflies, contributing to the biodiversity of **garden spaces.**

3. **Blue Vervain**, *Verbena hastata*, is used as a nervine, **aiding in the treatment of anxiety and insomnia** by providing soothing properties. The aerial parts of the plant, when harvested, are commonly prepared as infusions or tinctures to maximize its medicinal benefits. It is also esteemed for its potential anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic properties, making it a **valuable herb in addressing respiratory conditions.**

4. **California Poppy**, *Eschscholzia californica*, is stress-relieving and ornamental. It is **renowned for its stress-relieving abilities** due to the alkaloids it contains, acting as mild sedatives that help alleviate anxiety and promote relaxation. Besides its medicinal benefits, the California Poppy adds ornamental value, attracting pollinators and infusing vibrant color into garden landscapes.

5. **Echinacea**, also known as coneflower, stands out in the realm of medicinal plants for its **remarkable immune-boosting capabilities.** It is a go-to choice for **combating colds and flu** due to its potent medicinal properties. Studies have shown its potential in reducing both the severity and duration of respiratory infections when taken promptly at symptom onset. Harnessing Echinacea's benefits in the first year can set you on a path to a robust immune system.

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1>



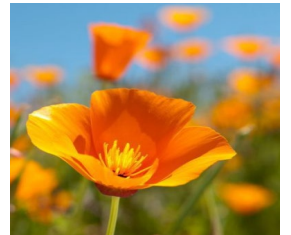
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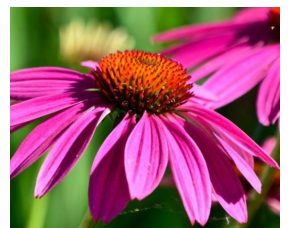
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4>



5>



Plants for Human Health

(continued from page 20)

8 Fall Plants with Medicinal Properties (continued)

6. **German Chamomile**, rich in flavonoids, is particularly effective in **alleviating pain and inflammation**, thanks to its anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic properties. Commonly consumed as a tea, it can soothe digestive issues like indigestion and heartburn. Rich in flavonoids and essential oils like chamazulene, German Chamomile is also beneficial for treating skin irritations and promoting wound healing when applied topically. The leaves and flowers of this annual herb are widely used in health care.

6>



7. **Lavender**, scientifically known as *Lavandula angustifolia*, is cherished for its medicinal properties. Its antimicrobial nature makes it **ideal for treating minor cuts, burns, and insect bites**. Harvested flowers can be dried for herbal teas, sachets, or infused oils, adding a fragrant touch to remedies. Lavender is also a popular addition to culinary dishes and desserts, lending a unique floral flavor while aiding in digestive support. **Lavender can be a useful natural deterrent for mice**, especially as a preventative measure.

7>



8. **Sage**, *Salvia officinalis*, is a perennial herb recognized for its digestive benefits, particularly in alleviating symptoms such as **bloating and indigestion**. Sage leaves can be used in teas to help reduce anxiety and enhance cognitive function, with traditional practices linking it to **memory enhancement**. Additionally, rich in antioxidants, sage offers potential anti-inflammatory effects, promoting **skin health** and aiding in managing conditions like **arthritis**.

8>



Sometimes

- **Sometimes**, God removes things to teach us obedience.
- **Sometimes**, He allows us to fail so we can learn and grow.
- **Sometimes**, He doesn't give us answers right away to help us learn to trust Him.
- **Sometimes**, He allows us to go through storms to remind us that He is the Lord of the winds.

There is a loving purpose in everything He does.

b.collections.design

District News

Cape Atlantic District

Cape Atlantic District (CAD) United Women in Faith. The Annual Fall Meeting & Communion has been rescheduled to Saturday, October 24, 2026 due to impending storms. The theme is *Climate & Environmental Justice* with Speaker Susan Zahorbenski, VP, NEJ UWFaith and Diaconal Minister. The venue is First United Methodist Church of Williamstown, NJ. For details, contact Grace Rapp at grace_rapp@comcast.net.

Asbury UMC. The United Women in Faith Annual Tea Party, *My Cup Runneth Over*, by Asbury United Methodist Church on August 15, 2026 was a wonderful success in a beautiful setting! Ladies in their tea party finery enjoyed enlightenment by keynote speaker Overseer Kevin D. Ragland of Lighthouse Community Church. Other local dignitaries included Atlantic City Councilman Kaleem Shabazz. Entertainment included two beautiful praise dances by Barbara Maysonette.

Gateway North District

Franklin St. John UWF. On September 19, 2026, Franklin St. John's UWFaith hosted a Paint and Praise Soul Care event to raise Mission Giving dollars to support the Franklin-St. John's Scholarship Fund. The event also entertained the 34 adults and 11 youth with praises, songs, poem recitations, and mission updates.



Skylands District

The District. Until the Nominations Committee has completed the process of filling officer positions, the District elected by consensus Pat Schutz and Barbara McShane as co-presidents. Rose Haller will continue as Treasurer, Betty Sayner will serve as Spiritual Growth Coordinator, and Elaine Warren will Chair Programs.

A special thank you was extended to outgoing President Liz Steen, and condolences were shared for the loss of the Secretary Sally Tomasino.

(continued on page 23)

District News

(continued from page 22)

Skylands District (continued).

Fall Meeting. Skylands District Fall Meeting was held on Friday, September 18, 8:30am-3:45pm at Sparta UMC as a day-long self-care, spiritual retreat hosted by Barb Miller.

Skylands United Women in Faith

B.R.E.W.

Be still
Recieve God's Love
Embrace Yourself
Welcome the day

Slow Down. Breathe Deeply. Begin Again.

Your 4 Session Experiences Include:

- Chair Yoga
- Silent Meditation
- Mindful Breathing
- Lunch
- Herbal Teas

Friday September 18th
8:30 - 3:45

Sparta United Methodist Church
71 S Sparta Ave Sparta, NJ

For More Information -
email Barbara Miller
1thess51522@zohomail.com

Sparta UWF. A June 28, 2026 picnic was hosted for a time of reorganizing and fellowship. It was attended by Skylands District UWFaith leaders and several members of Skylands local units.

Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit; caring for it honors God.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20



Legacy Fund & Mission Giving Updates

Legacy Fund

The UWFaith Legacy Fund is a permanently invested endowment that supports United Women in Faith's mission to improve the lives of women, children, and youth in perpetuity.

The Legacy Fund Update from August 31, 2026 is \$57,532,677.60. Greater New Jersey has contributed \$5,989.25 for 2026. The total giving for Greater New Jersey is \$207,330.79. We are close to reaching our Goal of \$60 Million.

Mission Giving

Mission Giving is UWFaith's primary system of financial support for programs that serve women, children, and youth, offering multiple giving channels such as Pledge to Mission, Special Mission Recognition, Gift to Mission, Gift in Memory, and the World Thank Offering. It is the central way UWFaith funds transformative programs that improve lives and advance justice for women, children, and youth.

Mission Giving through August 2026 totaled nearly \$2.0 million, an increase of \$135,000 or 7% compared to August 2025. Although giving is lower than 2024, the percentage of pledges paid (38%) is the highest in the last five years.

For 2026, the Mission Giving goal is \$6.8 million and Conferences pledged \$5.2 million.

212°
the extra degree
s.I. parker

Some men give up their designs when they have almost reached the goal;
while others, on the contrary, obtain a victory by exerting,
at the last moment, more vigorous efforts than before.

Polybius
Greek statesman & historian
c. – 120 B.C.

NEWS



Children's Defense Fund

In support of UWFaith's mission to participate in a **Children's Sabbath Celebration** during the month of October, the Holston Conference United Women in Faith will on October 17, 2026 partner with the Children's Defense Fund to host a Children's Sabbath event at Alex Haley Farm in Clinton, Tennessee. All are invited to join this free family event!

[Resources: UWFaith's Children's Sabbath <https://uwfaith.org/event/childrens-sabbaths-celebration-planning/>, Children's Defense Fund <https://www.childrensdefense.org/>, Alex Haley Farm <https://www.childrensdefense.org/our-work/building-a-movement-for-youth/haley-farm/>,

Church & Society, The United Methodist Church

Church & Society Grants. On July 30, 2026, the General Board of Church and Society announced applications for the **2026 Church and Society Grants** with a deadline of August 31, 2026 [grants@umcjustice.org]. The grant categories are:

Peace with Justice. Support of projects that witness to God's demands for a faithful, just, disarmed, and secure world.

Ethnic Local Church. Grants focus on the churches and people's self-identified needs as they address one or more chronic social issues or concerns.

Human Relations Day. Grants support of advocacy and community engagement aimed at uplifting the right of all God's children to realize their potential in right relationship with one another.

UMC Election Observers Program. Church & Society created the **UMC Election Observers Program** to equip United Methodists to serve as election observers. During the six-week program from August 18-September 22, 2026, participants explore the history of voting in the United States, the sacred nature of the vote, the role and responsibilities of election observers, and how to become an observer in their state and local community.

Church Women United in New Jersey (CWU-NJ)

President Coleen Williams and Vice President Geraldine Harvey announced on August 26, 2026 the passing of Sister, Rev. Vivian Cook, CWU-NJ First Vice President and recently elected Co-President.

United Methodist Association of Communicators (UMAC)

UMAC of the United Methodist Church announced its **Side x Side** (Eccl. 4:9-10) gathering scheduled for February 25-26, 2027 at Bethany United Methodist Church in Austin, Tx. Registration is now open. For details, registration, hotel accommodations reply to umaccommunicators@gmail.com.

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NEWS Around Town

(continued from page 25)

The Upper Room Fellowship

The results of The Upper Room Chaplains' Ministry Campaign are 1,93 donors gave \$117,218. This surpassed their goal of \$115,000 to change the lives of veterans, servicemen and women, and people behind bars.

United Women in Faith News

Climate Justice

UWFaith strongly recommends that we champion legislation to address our climate crisis. To support such legislative advocacy, UWFaith has drafted a petition for your review and signature. Please visit <https://win.newmode.net/unitedwomeninfaith/legislationforclimatejustice>

Directly Impacted Justice Fellows

In August 2026, the United Women in Faith offered "Directly Impacted Justice Fellows" for positions across the United States through the Office of Racial Justice. The six-month fellowship is for the period October 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027 with a monthly stipend of \$1,000. – Emily Jones, United Women in Faith, <https://uwfaith.org>.

Just Energy for All

"The adverse impacts of global climate change disproportionately affect individuals and nations least responsible for the emissions. We therefore support efforts of all governments to require mandatory reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and call on individuals, congregations, businesses, industries, and communities to reduce their emission." —UMC Social Principles 2016 General Conference. [<https://uwfaith.org/what-we-do/serve-and-advocate/just-energy-4-all/>]

National Week of Action Against School Pushout

UWFaith will join the [Dignity in Schools Campaign](https://dignityinschools.org) and allied organizations for the 2026 National Week of Action Against School Pushout on October 17-25, 2026. United Women in Faith members and friends are invited to learn, act, and/or lead during this week event. Resources: <https://uwfaith.org> and <https://dignityinschools.org/take-action/national-week-of-action>.

Racial Justice Seed Funding

UWFaith funding to end mass incarceration, stop the criminalization of communities of color, and/or interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline was announced again on July 21, 2026 with a September 30, 2026 deadline. <https://uwfaith.org/blog/2026/apply-for-racial-justice-seed-funding/>.

(continued on page 27)

NEWS Around Town

(continued from page 26)

Women and General Conference Webinar

On September 23, 2026, the Women and General Conference Webinar was held to discuss the need for women at General Conference 2028 and **running for General Conference delegate**. Discussions included the importance of the conference and the unique opportunities it offers to shape the future of the church. -Tara Barnes, Director of Denominational Relations, UWFaith.

The Human-Animal Bond

The [American Veterinary Medical Association](https://www.avma.org/) (AVMA) defines the human-animal bond as “a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors essential to the health and wellbeing of both.” <https://www.onehealth.org/blog/the-power-of-the-human-animal-bond>.

From Washington state comes the story of a senior citizen being saved by his senior canine, who risked her life obstructing traffic in order to find help.

On September 25th, the unnamed, 84-year-old owner of this beautiful pooch named Gita, fell, hurt his leg, and couldn't move. Gita then ran down to the main road where she stood on the paving lines waiting for someone to stop.

That someone was Deputy Wright, who was patrolling that particular area of Stevens County. Seeing neither house nor owner, Wright alighted on the road to try and get Gita into his patrol car, but the dog wouldn't budge.



credit - Stevens County Sheriff's Department

Visiting nearby residences, Wright couldn't identify the dog's owner. "Sensing something amiss, Wright went back to the dog which was now lying on the centerline," a statement from the Sheriff's office read. Wright tried to move the dog again, but this time she took off up a steep, unmarked, poorly traveled side road.

"Wright followed the dog, and it led him to a small summer cabin. He began checking around the area and observed an elderly male lying on the ground calling for help a short distance from the cabin. The 84-year-old male, who also had other medical conditions needing regular medications, had fallen and injured his leg. He had laid there for hours and may have had serious consequences if he had not been found."

"We credit Gita for saving his life that day. The loyalty and heroism of our furry friends never cease to amaze us," the office wrote. <https://www.goodnewsnetwork.org/dog-sits-down-in-middle-of-road-unmoving-until-officer-follows-to-save-her-owner/>.

Love Thy Neighbor

Across

1. Police rank
5. Munches
10. King of England (1016)
14. It's a good ____.
15. Point towards. (2 words)
16. An ____ (Vietnamese-American Writer)
17. Do unto others.
20. National Rifle Assn
21. Cooking container.
22. ____ what they do.
23. Couch
25. False (two words)
26. International Evaluation Education (acronym)
27. Backpack manufacturer
28. With 32 and 37 across, multi-country fund.
32. See 28 across.
34. Short signed voucher.
35. Hospitality design company.
36. Oprah TV network.
37. See 28 across.
39. Robbie ____
40. Fundraiser
42. Leg joint
43. ____ LIVE song.
44. Old Testament (abbrev.)
45. Spread grass.
46. __ Da!
47. Same name suffix.
48. Fruit
51. ____ the table.
(included in discussion)
55. Acronym
56. Hey! (Latin)
57. Love in action is ____.
59. Snake
60. Beak
61. Poppy (French)
62. Youngsters
63. It was. (contraction)
64. Ladders (obsolete noun)
65. Institute for New Economic Thinking

Down

1. Probabilities

Down

2. Worship
3. Connection between two or more people.
4. ____ about. (roam)
5. Lightweight watercraft
6. Workout training.
7. Flightless bird.
8. Horse gaits (3 words)
9. Heart tube
10. ____ (Mutt's cry)
11. Sentence object.
12. Do ____ others.
13. The good have treasures. (abbrev)
18. Fencing weapon.
19. Dive ____.

Down

19. Dive ____.
24. Theodore (abbrev.)
25. ____ whinny.
27. Call from a distance.
29. Playing against others.
30. Tempt
31. ____ Hemingway.
(American actress)
32. Centers of attention.
33. Ontario Women's Hockey Assn.
34. Old time monitor.
37. ____ Graphics
38. Associated Press
41. Circles
42. Password manager

Down

45. You
47. Irish holiday (short form)
48. Small strange groups.
49. ____ Island.
50. Bread ingredient.
51. Relative
52. Ice crystals
53. God is gracious (Arabic)
54. Cell phone software.
55. Double-reed woodwind
58. Good wishes greeting
62. That (Hindi)

GNJ UWFaith Calendar of Events 2026

November ?	Leadership Development Days via zoom (National)
January 10	Conference Leadership Development Event: 9 am - 12:00 pm Leadership Team Meeting, 12-2pm RSVP to holly.cyrus@faa.gov by Jan. 9th via zoom.
April 11	GNJUMW Annual Spring Meeting – 9:00-2:00 pm Central UMC 5 Marvin Ave, Linwood, NJ. RSVP to holly.cyrus@faa.gov by April 9th.
May 15 – May 17	Assembly in 2026 in Indianapolis, IN
June 6	Leadership Team Meeting Atlantic City Circuit. Asbury UMC 1213 Pacific Ave, Atlantic City, NJ RSVP to hollycyrus99@gmail.com by June 6th. Gather at 9:30 a.m. Meeting from 10 a.m. to Noon. Parking at 1219 Pacific Ave, Atlantic City, NJ 08401 (AC Bar & Grill)
July 17-19	Mission “u” Three Day School Centenary University, Hackettstown, NJ
July 23	South Seaville Camp Meeting 4 th Thursday Women’s Day; Tabernacle, South Seaville, NJ
August 1	Treasurer’s Meeting 9:30-11:30, Leadership Team Meeting 12-2 Christ UMC. 485 Hoes Lane, Piscataway, NJ 08854.
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 by October 16th.
Upcoming Events	Assembly in 2026 in Indianapolis, IN May 15-17, 2026.



Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds
and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:16 (NIV)

Voices of Purpose

2026 Newsletter Deadlines & Distribution

Newsletter Issue	Deadline for Articles	Distribution
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.



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

Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith

LEADERSHIP TEAM 2025-2026

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

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 31)

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

Revised: 8/2/25

Social Action Resources

Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith Website

www.gnjumw.org.

National Human Trafficking Prevention Month

www.state.gov/national-human-trafficking-prevention-month/

New Jersey Assembly Bills Pending

<https://legiscan.com/NJ/pending/sassembly-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>.



"...that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that **government of the people, by the people, for the people,** shall not perish from the earth."

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

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Advocacy on the Hill Day Photos

September 23, 2026

At the U.S. Capitol



Team members and Fatima Noredin, Senator Kim's Legislative Correspondent (3rd from left), at Senator Kim's Office.



Team members at Senator Booker's Office.



The walk to the Capital.



Met Senator Bernie Sanders (VT) in hallway – by L. Neblett



Lunch at the Capitol Cafeteria

United We Stand, Divided We Fall

"Let us trust God, and our better judgment to set us right hereafter. United we stand, divided we fall. Let us not split into factions which must destroy that union upon which our existence hangs."

Patrick Henry's March 1799 Speech