

Voices of Purpose

March 2025

Quarterly Newsletter of the Greater New Jersey United Women

President's Message

Hope you are enjoying your Lenten journey to the cross. We have so much to be thankful for as we start to enjoy the beautiful flowers and trees.

I do hope to see all of you for Mission – U on July 18-20 at Centenary University in Hackettstown, NJ where we will be "Practicing Hope." Please see the flyer in the newsletter for more information.

Thanks, and take care.

Holly M. Cyrus

President

Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith (GNJUWFaith)



Issue Highlights

- *Practicing Hope*
- *Easter Season Celebrations*
- *Immigration and Loving Our Neighbors*
- *Courageous Resisters*
- *Climate Control*



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www.gnjuwfaith.org



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March 2025

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March 2025

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March 2025

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Editor: Joyce Pratt
GNJUWFaith Communications Coordinator



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March 2025

Greater New Jersey 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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GNJ News Archive

For anyone who needs a little help 'Practicing Hope'

February 12, 2025 | By Sarah Borgstrom Lee
sborgstromlee@epagnj.org

"Hope is something that we need to practice our whole lives, and especially now," proclaimed Darlene DiDomineck, Deaconess and Executive Director of The Center Philadelphia. She was referring to the UWF study theme for this year, *"Practicing Hope Together."*

Through biblical reflection, breathwork, prayer, and study, the UWF study invites us all to consider how we experience and embody hope—as individuals, as communities, and as the church—while avoiding the pitfalls of toxic positivity or hope as a kind of vague optimism.

The study traces the experiences of the disciples following Jesus' resurrection and explores how their hopes were both disappointed in his death and expanded in his triumph over death through the resurrection.

Hope is both a feeling and an action.

Hope is necessary for human survival. Ask any nurse, and they'll tell you, "Healing requires hope." But the reality is that sometimes we don't feel all that hopeful. Mercifully, we can choose to embody hope for ourselves and for others, even when we don't feel hopeful.

John Wesley, the father of Methodism, in a moment of despair, confided to a friend that he was considering giving up preaching because he felt like he had no faith. His friend, Peter Bohler, replied, "Preach faith until you have it! Then you will preach faith because you have it!"

The same is true for hope. We can choose to embody hope, by taking hope-filled action, in faith and trust that the feelings will follow.

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For anyone who needs a little help ‘Practicing Hope’

(continued from page 6)

Deaconess Darlene DiDomineck, of EPA, is excited about the power of this study: “It’s key for such a time as this—and a really beautiful way to conceptualize how to practice embodied hope. The reality is that we always need hope; there is always injustice, there is always oppression, and there is always human suffering.”

Barbara Drake, Deaconess and current Dean of Mission U in EPA, was captivated by the course description: “‘What does it mean to have hope in God when things seem to be falling apart?’ That sentence just connects with everything that is going on in the world right now. One of my goals as dean is not only to facilitate the study of this material, but also, when we are getting together in person, how can we do other things to promote hope?”

The new curriculum is designed to be used at the main in-person event and in the life of the congregation. There is a study for adults that’s written in a way that provides everything you need to lead it—including a sample covenant, materials list, scripture recommendations, and questions for consideration. They also have a program for children and youth that can be easily adapted into a Vacation Bible School program.

Hope is essential. Hope cultivates resilience. Resilience cultivates the opportunity for a new beginning. UWF’s Mission U 2025 is here to help you, and your congregation explore how God might be calling you to embody hope together for yourselves, for your neighborhood, and for the global community.

You can visit United Women in Faith Digital to purchase the study and access it now, or you can save the date and plan to attend Mission U, July 18-20, at Centenary University. Elizabeth Vaneekhoven, Dean of Mission U for GNJ, can’t wait to welcome you. “We look forward to greeting you in July for a timely Mission u 2025 spiritual retreat weekend. Plan to come and worship, study, sing, greet old friends and make new ones with us while we learn how to *Practice Hope Together*.

The weekend is open to adults, youth, and children. There will be time for several Table Talk Topics, conversations, sharing meals, and a biblically based Jeopardy-type game for all ages as well. Let’s grow our faith in concert. Registration will be opening soon.”

[Article submitted by Sue Zahorbenski, VP, NEJ UWFaith via Elizabeth Vaneekhoven, Mission U chair. 3.9.25]



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Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith
Spring Meeting

"School To Prison Pipeline."

Saturday, April 12, 2025

9:00 am - 1:00 pm

9:00 am Registration & Tech Check
Pastor: Reverend Jisun Nam
UW Faith President: Donna Rowlands

Wesley United Methodist Church
1500 Plainfield Avenue
South Plainfield, NJ 07080
(908) 757-2838



Presenter: Emily Jones

"For Such A Time as This": Called to interrupt the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Emily Jones is the executive for racial justice at United Women in Faith. She staffs United Women in Faith's work on the Charter for Racial Justice, the Reading Program, and the campaign to end mass incarceration and interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline

<https://uwfaith.org/what-we-do/serve-and-advocate/racial-justice>

SERVING BREAKFAST & LUNCH: No Cost

Please Pre-Register so that we have an accurate count to Holly Cyrus (GNJ UW Faith President). Email: Holly.Cyrus@faa.gov , Phone: 609-226-5337.

Please provide list of names and/or numbers.

Love Gift: Wesley UMC. Ingathering Recipient: Camden Neighborhood Center
(Educational and Fictional books.)

Hybrid: **Zoom link**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83396872153?pwd=aUNHckxIV0RZVE1aNIpCK284SGVzdz09>



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Saint Patrick's Day

The history of St. Patrick's Day 2025 dates back to the early 17th century when it was made an official Christian feast day by the Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion (especially the Church of Ireland), the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the Lutheran Church. The day remembers Saint Patrick and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland and celebrates the heritage and culture of the Irish.

The holiday has been celebrated on the North American continent since the 17th century. Irish American immigrants brought Saint Patrick's Day to the United States. The first civic and public celebration of Saint Patrick's Day in the 13 colonies took place in Boston, Massachusetts in 1737.



In 1780 General George Washington commanded soldiers of Irish descent in the Continental Army and allowed his troops a holiday on March 17. This event became known as The St. Patrick's Day Encampment of 1780. St. Patrick's Day 2025, while not a legal holiday throughout the entire the United States, is nonetheless widely recognized and observed throughout the country.

St. Patrick's Day 2025 traditions include celebrations concentrate on Irish themed parties, drinks, and food. Many people dress in green clothing and eat green colored food. Irish clubs and pubs often hold celebrations or have special deals. Christians also attend church services and the Lenten restrictions on eating and drinking alcohol are lifted for the day and many communities hold large street parades to mark St. Patrick's Day.

St. Patrick's Day 2025 takes place on March 17.

“When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong.
You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and
you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt:
I am the LORD your God.

[Leviticus 19:33-34](#) ESV

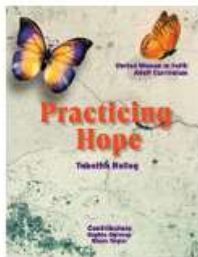
MISSION U 2025



Mission u 2025: Practicing Hope Together

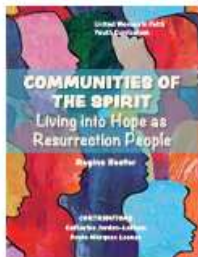
Join us at **Mission u** as we explore the theme, Practicing Hope Together. Mission u participants will study the resurrection appearances of Jesus and the example of early Christian communities to explore what it means to practice hope in God even when things seem to be falling apart.

Mission u 2025 offers three exciting curricula on this theme. Order your copy here: uwfaithresources.org



Adult— *Practicing Hope* by Tabatha Holley

Practicing Hope is a biblical curriculum that explores hope particularly when hope seems hard to find, asking questions such as: How does Christ teach us to embody hope when our backs are against the wall? Participants will find ways to allow all of our communities to cultivate hope that is honest about our current conditions (refugia), restorative when everything feels urgent (rest), and possible even when we transgress (repair).



Youth— *Communities of the Spirit: Living into Hope as Resurrection People* by Regina Heater

Communities of the Spirit is a youth curriculum examining the hope we find in early post-resurrection Christian communities and how they kept hope alive in the most difficult times. Youth will be asked to consider what they believe are important components of a Community of the Spirit, hoping they will identify what they need in a community to help them continue to become the people God calls them to be.



Children— *Hope as a Resurrection People* by Joni Cisowski

Hope as a Resurrection People intends to help children build trust in Jesus to bring comfort and support as they find courageous hope in the face of uncertainty. Through each session, children will develop their understanding of hope by reflecting on important people, communities, places, activities, personal goals, and desires for the future. Then, they will look for ways to build communal hope to be the change our world needs today.

JOIN US dates/times:
[Enter your Mission u events date here.]

July 18 - 20, 2025

RSVP: [Include your url/link to the event, if any, here.]

<https://na.eventscloud.com/825670>

Centenary University, 400 Jefferson St., Hackettstown, NJ 07840
Come learn together for the transformation of the world!



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Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Easter

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a 40-day period of fasting, repentance, a spiritual preparation leading up to Easter. Traditionally observed by Catholics and now embraced by several Protestant denominations, Ash Wednesday serves as a solemn reminder of human mortality and the need for repentance. In 2025, Ash Wednesday was observed on March 5.

Although not mentioned in the Bible, Ash Wednesday is rich in Christian symbolism, a tradition developed starting with the Council of Nicaea which established a 40-day fasting period before Easter. The heart of Ash Wednesday and Lent is about turning back to God. The 40 days of Lent reflect Jesus' time in the wilderness, where He fasted and prepared for His ministry.

During Ash Wednesday services, a priest or minister applies ashes in the shape of a cross on the foreheads of worshippers, often while reciting the words: *"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return"* (Genesis 3:19). The ashes, typically made from the burned branches of the previous year's Palm Sunday, symbolizes grief over sin, humility before God, and the hope found in Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The ashes are used to keep in mind our humble origin and of how the body of Adam was formed out of the dust of the earth and of death when our bodies will return to dust, thus the necessity of doing penance for our sins.



Lent

Lent is the 40-day period leading up to Easter (excluding Sundays) that starts on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday, 46-days before Easter Sunday. This year, Lent will begin on Wednesday, March 5, 2025 and will end April 19th 2025. The 40 days of Lent involve fasting, prayer, and almsgiving as a way to connect deeper with God.

During lent, Christians honor the 40 days and nights following Christ's baptism when He went into the wilderness without water and food and was tempted by Satan. During that time, Christ did what we do today when we fast: wrestle with temptation.



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Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Easter

(continued)

Lent (continued)

The three main ways people engage in Lent are through fasting (abstaining from something to focus on God), prayer, and almsgiving (giving to charity).

It's important to remember the primary purpose of Lent is meant to be a time of repentance. That's not a feeling of shame but an awareness that sin separates us from God and what Christ endured to save us from sin, death, and the devil.

Easter

Easter is one of the central holidays, or Holy Days, of Christianity. It honors the [Resurrection of Jesus](#) three days after His [death by crucifixion](#). For many Christian churches, Easter is the joyful conclusion to the [Lenten season](#) of devoted prayer, [fasting](#), and penitence.

Along with the [Nativity of Christ](#), Easter is one of the most important celebrations in the Christian calendar. It is when Christians glorify and give thanks for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. After His crucifixion, death, and burial, Christ rose from the grave three days later. By this, He conquered death and redeemed us from sin.

This year, Easter will be on **March 31st, 2024**.

The word does not properly occur in Scripture, although the King James Version has it in [Acts 12:4](#) where it stands for [Passover](#), as it is rightly rendered in the Revised Version (British and American). There is no trace of Easter celebration in the New Testament, though some would see an intimation of it in [1 Corinthians 5:7](#). The Jewish Christians in the early church continued to celebrate the [Passover](#), regarding Christ as the true paschal lamb, and this naturally passed over into a commemoration of the death and resurrection of our Lord or an Easter feast. [International Standard [Bible Encyclopedia](#)]

Resources: Christianity.com, Wikipedia.



Blessing for when you need a little hope

*These days feel heavy and dark,
like hope packed up and left,
and forgot to send a postcard.
We cry: Where are the good things?
And honestly, where are the good people—
the sensible ones
fighting for what matters?*

*Why does it feel like bad stuff
always elbows its way
to the front,
pushing everything good to the sidelines?*

*We're tired. Exhausted, really.
Desperation is knocking,
and it's tempting to surrender.*

*Blessed are you,
who see the world as it is:
the sickness and loneliness,
the injustice that never seems to end,
the greed and misuse of power,
the violence and intimidation,
the mockery of truth,
and disdain for weakness,
and worse—
the seeming powerlessness
of anyone trying to stop it.*

*Blessed are you,
worn down by
hard-earned cynicism,
running on fumes,
with no promise of a destination.*

*Maybe hope isn't so distant.
Maybe it's there—small, persistent,
and stubborn.*

*May you grasp something
in the heaviness.
A glimmer of what could be,
and walk, step by step,
toward the possibility
that goodness exists.
Hope is an anchor dropped into the future
pulling you forward,
toward something better—
even if it doesn't feel like it right now.¹¹*

¹¹ Kate Bowler and Jessica Richie. "For When You Need a Little Hope" in *The Lives We Actually Have: 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days*. (New York: Convergent Books, 2023). 40-41.

Submitted by Sheri Shumate, United Women in Faith.



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GNJUWFaith Legacy Fund Report

March 18, 2025

The Legacy Fund Team is preparing for March 23, 2025 Day of Giving. We are getting close to our goal of reaching \$60,000,000. On March 23rd at 11Am UWF Legacy team will be live streaming the donations being made to the legacy Fund during the Day of Giving. Currently as of the end of February 2025 our goal was \$46,026,522.00 and growing.

Here are three ways of giving with an Impact.

Friends Of Legacy: To become a **Friend of Legacy** is by making a major gift of \$5000 or more to **The Legacy Endowment Fund**. Options are available for one-time gifts or customized multi-year pledges paid over 3-5 years. This will become a part of building a financial resource that ensures UWFaith is able to carry out it's vital programs and activities for many years to come.

1869 Society: To become a member of **1869 Society** and leave a legacy by making a planned gift to **The Legacy Endowment fund** today. Planned gifts may include will bequests or estate gifts, life insurance policies, the sale of assets or property, appreciated securities, retirement fund, or IRA Charitable Rollover gifts. The **1869 Society** was launched to commemorate the year the organization's founding and to establish a way in which UWFaith members, their families, and other supporters can leave a lasting legacy to support future ministry.

150 Legacy Builder: With a monthly gift of \$18.69 or more you can become a **Legacy Builder** and help build a strong financial future for UWFaith. Added to the endowment, your monthly gift will continue to grow and multiply, making a difference for many years to come. Your recurring donation is easy to set upon line by visiting uwfaith.org/legacy or texting "Give" to 20503.

Corporate Matching Gifts: You may be able to multiply your gift through a workplace matching gift program. Check with your current employer or the employer from which you are retired for details:

Gift in Honor or Memory: would you like to honor a special person in your life of a deceased loved one? Consider making a gift to **The Legacy Endowment Fund** as a lasting tribute. A gift to the endowment is a wonderful way to honor the service of a dedicated volunteer or family member on a birthday, retirement, or other special occasion. A package may only be opened once. A gift to UWFaith's endowment will help support missional work for many years to come.

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GNJUWFaith Legacy Fund Report

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Building a Legacy for the Future: UWFaith members commitment and faithful service has propelled our foremothers' vision forward for more than 150 years. Our actions have always spoken as loudly as our words.

Acts of Love

Acts of Faith

Acts of Generosity

We Show up and we get things done. Together, we're making the world a better place, locally and globally.

Give Today:

On-Line: uwfaith.org/legacy

By Phone: 212-870-3705

By Mail:

United Women in Faith

Attn: Legacy

Church Center for the United Nations

777 United Nations Plaza, 11th floor

New York, NY 10017



For more information:

Legacy Endowment Fund e-mail: legacy150@uwfaith.org

150 Next: The legacy Endowment Fund

Together We Are Building Our Legacy.

Brochures are available. Please share with family and friends.

Anyone making a donation to the Legacy Fund can receive a pin acknowledging their donation.

GNJUWFaith would like to form a team for the Legacy Fund Promotions. Contact Marilyn Powell, The Legacy Liaison: mpowell56@comcast.net M: 609-707-8530 and/or Yvonne Bouknight, Legacy Steering Chair: ybouk@verizon.net M: 201-396-9531.

Submitted by: Marilyn Powell

The Legacy Liaison

mp/3/16/25



United
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The Legacy Endowment Fund



The Legacy Endowment Fund of United Women in Faith is a permanently invested endowment that supports the work of improving the lives of women, children, and youth at home and abroad through Christian spiritual formation, leadership, fellowship, and education.

United Women in Faith dates back to 1869 when eight Methodist Episcopal women formed to meet the needs of children and youth in India. Today as United Women in Faith with hundreds of thousands of members across the United States and partners around the world, we pursue that mission where needed.

Join us by giving in one or more of three options: Friends of Legacy, 1869 Society, or 150 Legacy Builder. For details visit www.uwfaith.org/legacy. You may also write to the GNJUW Faith Legacy Fund Committee Chair from our contact page at www.gnjuwfaith.org or send an email via legacy150@uwfaith.org.

Other Ways to Give Support for United Women in Faith

Where It Is Needed Most
Social Action & Justice Work
Spiritual Growth and Nurturing
Opportunities
Education & Leadership
Development

Legacy Fund
National Mission
International Mission
Tribute Gift to Mission
Deaconess & Home Missioner
Support

For details, visit <https://uwfaith.org/give/>

Faith Talks on Immigration and Loving Our Neighbors

UWFaith extended an invitation to join them for a live recording of the Faith Talks podcast on March 6, 2025 for a discussion on Immigration and Loving Our Neighbors.

From executive orders to talking points, at the border and in our communities, immigration has landed a place at the forefront of conversations about justice. Many communities and families have been left feeling uncertain and fearful. As deportation efforts expand and rhetoric harshens, we are left wondering what it all means for our justice work.

Care and concern for immigrants has always been a priority for our community. However, with the recent enforcement actions, we are concerned about how undocumented loved ones are faring. On Thursday, March 6, at 2:00 p.m. ET, host Jennifer R. Farmer welcomed Melissa Bowe, Alba Jaramillo, and Sarah Kolsto as guests on the live recording of the Faith Talks podcast. Discussed was the current climate for immigration and impact on our communities.

Melissa Bowe and Jaramillo are the co-executive directors of the Immigration Law and Justice Network, and Sarah Kolsto is the refugee services director at Della Lamb Community Services. Della Lamb is a National Mission Institution.

Remember to subscribe to the Faith Talks podcast and hear previously recorded episodes wherever you get your favorite podcasts or at:

<https://uwfaith.org/resources/podcasts/>

Immigration Statuses

Everyone within the U.S. has an immigration status, which refers to the type of presence individuals have in the country. There are four main immigration status types that are important to know.

Citizens

Immigrants who gain citizenship will be able to work legally and receive public benefits for which they qualify. They can also help family members such as spouses, children, parents, or siblings become legal residents and citizens. They receive a two-year, renewable green card.

Conditional and Permanent Residents

Conditional residents are individuals who receive their green card prior to completing two years of marriage. Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) are immigrants who have
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Immigration Statuses

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Conditional and Permanent Residents (continued)

obtained a green card and are authorized to live and work in the US permanently. LPRs receive permanent resident cards, or green cards, which prove their status.

Non-Immigrant Status

Individuals who are considered non-immigrants are legally living and working in the country on a temporary basis. Overstaying a visa, violating its terms, or obtaining a visa through fraudulent means could result in a change to undocumented status.

Undocumented

Undocumented immigrants are individuals who are in the country illegally or otherwise without permission, in which case they would be unable to live in the US temporarily or permanently. Undocumented individuals face deportation at any time.

U.S. Immigrant Statistics – 2021

In 2022.

New authorized immigrant arrivals by reason and region of origin

People from Asia made up the largest cohort of newly arrived immigrants in 2021

Table with 7 columns and 5 rows.

Immigration reason	Europe	North America	Asia	Africa	South America	Other
Total	348.4K	743.8K	1.1M	158K	189.4K	32.5K
Work	122K	474.5K	349.6K	47.9K	46.4K	19.6K
School	161.9K	51K	367.7K	39.1K	76.9K	5.5K
Family	51.5K	205.7K	328.6K	42.3K	58.6K	6.4K
Diversity, safety, or other	13.1K	12.7K	51.4K	28.8K	7.5K	1.1K

Data includes non-tourist visas, new arrival green cards, refugees, and asylees. Data for safety and diversity may sometimes be an underestimate as some countries' data is suppressed.

Source: [State Department](#) Get the data Embed Download image Download SVG



United Women in Faith Digital



Welcome!

UWFaith renewed its welcome this quarter to new members with an invitation to join us in this new digital space. This platform was created to access groups and connect over shared interests, provide spaces to engage in conversation around resources like Faith Talks and Voices From the Field, and access exclusive content created just for this digital space.

The platform includes:

- Polls, prompts, posts, and questions that can bring more people into conversation in a private space just for our community.
- Direct messaging.
- Posts, comments, and replies to comments on posts, and “heart” posts.

You can expect access to our program guide and Mission u curriculum; connection with other UWFaith members and people across the Connection sharing stories, experiences, and ideas; and find a little inspiration, thought provoking conversations, and expert perspective each and every day.

UWFaith invites you to join this social media community by contributing a story, experience, or idea. Visit www.uwfaith.org for more information.



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A Call for Courageous Resisters and Moral Leaders

by Rev. Dr. AnneMarie Mingo

On March 18, 2025, the United Women in Faith hosted this presentation by Dr. Mingo of selections from her extensive research on Black Churchwomen's leadership in the Civil Rights Movement.

Dr. Mingo's lecture explained the virtues of courage, which is developed not borne, and moral imagination. She shared the following effects that make a difference:

Write thank you notes to federal judges.

Hold the church accountable. That is where the fight should start.

Banning of books – Churches have not spoken.

Always leave room for hope.

Focus on the one thing you wish for (unity, diversity).

Trust God to do the rest.



[Joshua 1:9](#) ESV

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

[1 Peter 5:3](#) ESV

Not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

[Matthew 7:12](#) ESV

"So, whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.



District News

Delaware Bay District News

Upcoming events:

Saturday, April 12, 2025, 9am-3pm

Conference Spring Meeting - HYBRID option vis ZOOM
Wesley UMC, South Plainfield (Middlesex County)
Program – ***School to Prison Pipeline***



Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith
Spring Meeting
Saturday, April 12, 2025
9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Wesley United Methodist Church
1500 Plainfield Avenue
South Plainfield, NJ 07080
(908) 757-2838

9:00 am Registration & Tech Check
Pastor: Reverend Jisun Nam
UWF President: Donna Rowlands

"For Such A Time as This": Called to Interrupt the School-to-Prison Pipeline
Presenter: Emily Jones, UWF Executive for Racial Justice

- Reading program
- Charter for Racial Justice
- Campaign to End Mass Incarceration
- Campaign to Interrupt the School to Prison Pipeline

[Zoom here!](#)

[What we do!](#)

Breakfast and Lunch provided!
Please Register with GNJ UWF President Holly Cyrus
Email: Holly.Cyrus@faa.gov
Phone: 609-226-5337.

Love Gift: Wesley UMC.
Ingathering Recipient: Camden Neighborhood Center- fiction and educational books

Monday, April 25, 2025, 7pm

District Event – Hands on Missions!
Pitman UMC - Assembling 100 Hygiene Kits for UMCOR

Monday, April 28, 2025, 7pm

Spring Meeting – Hands-on Mission!
Creating 100 UMCOR Hygiene Kits.



Spring Meeting
Delaware Bay District
United Women in Faith
April 28
7 PM
Pitman UMC

Hands-On Mission!
We are creating 100
UMCOR Hygiene Kits!

All women welcome!

Connect and Grow

United Women in Faith



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United Women in Faith Announces Website for Assembly 2026

[New York, New York, March 17, 2025]—United Women in Faith is excited to announce that the website for Assembly 2026 is now open! This year's Assembly, themed "**Dream it! Believe it! Do it!**" will take place in Indianapolis, Indiana, May 15-17, 2026. Registration for the event will open on Sept. 1, 2025.

What awaits you at this empowering event?

Opportunities to:

- **Be nurtured** by deep soul care experiences.
- **Be equipped** through cutting-edge workshops.
- **Be inspired** by top women experts in their field.
- **Become influencers** through networking connections.
- **Make an impact** through action for justice.

Now is the time to start promoting Assembly with your circles, friends, and neighbors. Marketing materials are available on the site to help members invite persons to register. The more sisters we gather, the bigger we can **Dream it! Believe it! Do it!**



UWFaith Assembly 2026

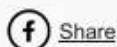
(continued from page 22)

Come be transformed at Assembly 2026!

Visit uwfaith.org/assembly



Please share this invite and link with others in your group/circle/unit.



Your [gifts](#) support resources like these that educate, empower, inform, and inspire women. Your giving makes it possible for United Women in Faith to carry out its vital work to connect and nurture women through Christian formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence, and impact local and global communities.



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Program Resources

Author Talk with Heather McTeer Toney on Before the Streetlights Come On: Black America's Urgent Call for Climate Solutions

Date & Time Apr 30, 2025 07:00 PM

Description

Join United Women in Faith members and friends for a special Reading Program Author Talk with Heather McTeer Toney on *Before the Streetlights Come On: Black America's Urgent Call for Climate Solutions* in celebration of Earth Month. *Before the Streetlights Come On* is a 2025 United Women in Faith Reading Program selection.

All are welcome. There is no cost to participate. Pre-reading of the book is not required, but it will enrich your experience of the author talk. Registration is accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

To register:

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/jmZ2p8UOT0CVIxd8l_WCg?fbclid=IwY2xjawJRcnJleHRuA2FibQIxMAABHVd8ZRPJcSH1WXXj7er-YuCCJr4RXau0EowwGfGFNYmc4-klsB7S85GENA_aem_WRyOBxiQD6yLFSKt0pZ8cA#/registration

Submitted by Grace Rapp 3.26.25



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About Mission u

The GNJUWFaith (Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith) spiritual retreat weekend, called Mission u 2025 will be an engaging and soul-searching experience with a community of women and men, youth, and children. Held at Centenary University in Hackettstown, NJ on July 18-20, with the overarching theme for all of *Practicing Hope Together*, we look forward to seeing and meeting you all there.

While some have never heard of Mission u, it has a long history, dating from the first recognized Methodist Episcopal Women's Missionary Society from 1869. Formally recognized in 1901, it remains a potent opportunity in the spiritual formation of life, individually and communally. With multiple avenues for study and contemplation throughout many years, its beginning was specifically directed at informing women in local churches about the work of missionary women sent abroad to places where Jesus the Christ was unknown. This was made possible through the monthly magazines published with articles and letters from the Women's Society's leadership. Included were the various themes and studies offered during the summer months, for study and meeting together.

In 2013, the name of the Cooperative School of Christian Mission was changed to Mission u, with a focus on the spiritual transformation of women, youth, and children. This year's theme seems prophetic, as we live in uncertain times within the nation and the world.

Mission u is the place where questions about God and life in Jesus can be probed in discussions with others in a safe space. It is a place to make new acquaintances and perhaps life-long friends, while probing scripture, and sharing stories in class and meals together. There is time for mission work, exploring timely topics, with some intentional fun added in. Attendance also qualifies as re-certification for Lay Servants, and CEU credits are available for clergy.

Come to be challenged, confirmed and encouraged in your spiritual journey with God in community. In the midst of chaos around us, let us "Practice Hope" together. We look forward to meeting you there!

Elizabeth Vaneekhoven, M.Div., M.A., Dean of Mission u 2025

Environmental Sustainability

Ecology

A team of Stockton faculty members has been awarded a three-year United States Department of Agriculture grant to promote maple sugaring in the South Jersey region through research and community outreach. They are looking for locals who want to produce their own maple syrup from red maples on their properties.

"We want to introduce people to the value of their land, and if in some way it can prevent deforestation, that, to us, is the biggest win."

- Dr. Judith Vogel

The Stockton grant involves using modern technologies such as reverse osmosis, and vacuum assist pumps to implement an extensive sapping system on Stockton's 1,600-acre main campus. Initial sample tapping began in February 2021 on red maples, which have a lower sugar content than sugar maples, but are plentiful in South Jersey. Three years of data will be collected.

In addition, the grant is establishing a community outreach program of traditional tapping methods on individual properties in the South Jersey area. The Stockton team brings together individuals with expertise in forestry, soil science, economics, and biodiversity. "We are passionate about economic and environmental sustainability and look forward to working with the local community," said Ecologist Aaron Stoler.

The [Stockton University Maple Project](https://stockton.edu/maple/project.html) hosted two free family-friendly events on Saturday, January 11, 2025, a Maple Syrup Workshop and a Adopt a Tree Tapping at their Galloway Campus.

<https://stockton.edu/maple/project.html>.

Education

H.R. 7946 – Climate Change Education Act

Requires the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish a Climate Change Education Program, and for other purposes. Congress made 13 findings which includes (1) the evidence for human-induced climate change is overwhelming and undeniable and (3) providing clear information about climate change in a variety of forms, can remove the fear and the sense of hopelessness and encourage individuals and communities to take action.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/7946/text>

Church Women United Annual Spring Assembly

Theme: "Fair and Accessible Housing"



Scripture: "My people will live in peaceful dwelling places,
secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest" (Isaiah 32:18)

Saturday, April 26, 2025

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Cranford Community Center

220 Walnut Avenue

Cranford, New Jersey 07016

Contact :Coleen Williams (914)512- 4336

Patricia Nira Smith, Chair
Sara Joslin, State President

Special Guests:

**Mr. Randall Woods, Executive Director,
Plainfield Housing Authority**

**Mr. Matthew Hersh, Vice President,
Housing and Community Development of NJ**

Vegan Meal available by requested

**Bring:*

*Non-perishable Food
Donations
for
Cranford Family Care*

***DONATION: \$15.00 (INCLUDES LUNCH)**

Mail registration with payment to:

Mrs. JoAnne Mettle, 61 Bruen Avenue, Irvington, NJ 07111

Please Print

---Registration---

(Make check payable to Church Women United-NJ)

(Registration Deadline - April 19, 2025)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone

No.: _____ **Email:** _____

**Church/
Organization** _____

Payment: Check _____ **Amount enclosed: \$** _____



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Odds and Ends

Across

1. Website address ending
5. The ____ of March
9. ____ Wednesday
12. Declare
13. Gentle accent
14. Clearing
15. Book of _____
18. Short summary
19. Cool or great!
22. Climbing equipment
26. ____ no!
27. NJ university (initials)
28. Earlier than
29. Daughter of Zeus?
30. Skin disorder (abbrev.)
32. School to Prison
_____.
36. That (Spanish)
38. St. George and the
_____ Dragons
39. Medicine man (initials)
41. _____ habitat
43. Pair
44. 9th Alphabet
45. Handmaidens inferior to
men (2 words)
46. Declares
48. Polish surname
50. Instruct
51. _____, sanitary
health org.
52. International airline
54. Tall, dark, & handsome
55. iPhone Model
56. Small bag
58. Duet (3 words)
62. Badge
64. Chinese "Year of the
_____"
"
65. It's time to say _____

Down

1. Health diet sources
2. Clear
3. At the _____
4. Gather (2 words)
5. Intl Literacy Assn
6. Radio code

[illegible]

Down

7. High Priest of Shiloh
8. Add fuel to
9. In addition
10. Selenium symbol
11. Pronoun
16. League of Legends
17. Neither, ____ and not
either
20. Sum up
21. Pronoun
23. Water island fruit
24. Dull
25. Greek moon goddess
29. Old English vowel
30. Time equal lengths
31. Twisted hairstyle
33. _____ stand corrected
(2 words)

Down

34. The _____ (small arm of the sea)
35. _____ SYNC, boy band
37. The Book of _____
39. _____ treat
40. _____ Hashanah
42. Annual Frequency of Exceedance
43. UPS Scanner
47. Procedure
49. Middle-aged man (Japanese)
52. Star Trek alien group
53. Car
56. Kung Fu panda
57. Armed Forces rank
59. Texas city

Down

60. You're kidding!
61. Iron symbol
62. Including you
(teen slang)
63. U.S. State
(abbrev.)

Puzzle by J. Pratt
3.14.25

[Answers: Page 33]



GNJUWFaith Calendar of Events 2025 & Upcoming Events

2025

January 11	Conference Leadership Development Event: 9 am - 12:00 pm Leadership Team Meeting, 12-2 pm RSVP to holly.cyrus@faa.gov by Jan. 10 th . via Zoom.
April 12	GNJUWFaith Annual Spring Meeting – 9:00-2:00 pm Need location. RSVP to holly.cyrus@faa.gov by April 11 th .
May 18 – May 22	26th EPA & GNJ Annual Conference Wildwood Convention Center, Wildwood, NJ
June 7	Leadership Team Meeting (including all District Presidents) – 9:30 am-noon Need location. RSVP to holly.cyrus@faa.gov by June 6 th
July 18-20	Mission “u” Three Day School Centenary University, Hackettstown, NJ
July 24	South Seaville Camp Meeting 4 th Thursday Women’s Day; Tabernacle, South Seaville, NJ
August 2	Treasurer’s Meeting 9:30-11:30, Leadership Team Meeting 12-2 pm Need location. (Leadership Team Meeting includes all District Presidents)

(continued on page 29)



GNJUWFaith Calendar of Events 2024 – 2025

(continued from page 28)

2025 (continued)

October 18 **GNJUWFaith 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 17th.

Upcoming Events **Assembly in 2026** (Indianapolis, IN) - **May 15-17, 2026**
NE Jurisdiction – 2028 April 11-13 No location yet.
Register at nejuwfaith.org.

Retreat & Meeting Recordings

Visit GNJUWFaith website at www.gnjuwfaith.org,
GNJUWFaith EVENTS, Program Resources.

GNJUWFaith Resources and Actions

<https://tinyurl.com/ResourcesGNJUWF>

UWFaith National Events

<https://uwfaith.org/events/calendar/>

New Brand Resources

<https://umwmissionresources.org/>

United Women in Faith YouTube

<https://m.youtube.com/c/uwwomenfaith>

UWFaith. In 1972, United Methodist Women first became the women's mission organization as part of The United Methodist Church's Board of Global Ministries. And in 2012, The United Methodist Church General Conference voted to make United Methodist Women's national policymaking body autonomous.

<https://uwfaith.org/who-we-are/our-history/>.



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Voices of Purpose

Newsletter Deadlines & Distribution

Newsletter Issue	Deadline for	
	Articles	Distribution
Spring 2024 (January – March)	April 4, 2024	April 8, 2024
Summer 2024 (April – June)	July 4, 2024	July 8, 2024
Fall 2024 (July – September)	October 3, 2024	October 7, 2024
Winter 2024 (October – December)	January 3, 2025	January 7, 2025

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 for 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



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Greater New Jersey United Women in Faith

LEADERSHIP TEAM 2024 - 2025

PRESIDENT

Holly Cyrus ('24)

VPRES/PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Virgil Williams ('28)

SECRETARY

Linda Wilson (24)

TREASURER

Carol Bloch ('24)

SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT ADVISOR

Barbara Miller ('24)

Membership, Nurture and OUTREACH CHAIR

Holly Cyrus ('23)

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTIONS

ADVOCATE

Sherri Shumate ('23)

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Grace Rapp ('25)

STANDING RULES CHAIR

Grace Rapp

PHOTOGRAPHER

Lou Hyson ('23)

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Joyce Pratt ('23)

NATIVE AMERICAN MINISTRIES REP.

Leslie Bivins

LGBTQ Representative

Open

GNJUWF Website: www.gnjumw.org

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

NOMINATIONS CHAIR

Open

CLASS OF 2024

Cynthia Lydon

CLASS OF 2024

Ivy Daniels

CLASS OF 2024

Rosa Lee McNair

CLASS OF 2025

Kathy Schulz

CLASS OF 2027

Rosa Williams

CLASS OF 2027

Jill Morrow

APPOINTED

CHARTER FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

Chair: Sue Zahorbenksi

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

Legacy Fund Committee

Chair: Yvonne Bouknight

Members: Sherri Shumate

(continued on page 31)



United
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in Faith

LEADERSHIP TEAM – 2024-2025

(continued from page 31)

DISTRICT PRESIDENTS

COASTAL PLAINS

CAPE ATLANTIC

Virgil Williams ('22)

CENTRAL

Debbie Campion ('25)

DELAWARE BAY ('25)

Staci Sheetz

METRO HIGHLANDS

MEADOWLANDS

Tracy Carroll ('25)
Tia Swanson ('25)

RARITAN SHORE

OPEN

SKYLANDS

Elizabeth (Liz) Steen ('26)

ELECTED BY OTHER GROUPS

KOREAN NETWORK PRESIDENT COORDINATOR

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

Kathleen Schulz

ALTERNATE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Yvonne Bouknight

DEAN MISSION "U"

Elizabeth Vaneekhoven

ASSISTANT DEAN MISSION "U"

BERNADETTE CATALINE

NORTHEASTERN JURISDICTION VICE PRESIDENT

Sue Zahorbenski

UMW NE JURISDICTION MISSION ADVOCATE

REBECCA PARSONS

UMW NATIONAL DIRECTOR/SECRETARY

BETHANY AMEY-SUTTON

GNJUMC PRESIDING BISHOP

Rev John R. Schol

CONFERENCE UMW WEBSITE: www.gnjuwfaith.org

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/ssembly-state-local-government-committee/id/3085>.

New Jersey Legislature

List of all New Jersey legislators in alphabetical order showing, party, hose, 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>.

Answers to March 2025 Puzzle

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

