



United
Women
in Faith

VOLUME 77, ISSUE 3, SUMMER 2025

TEL A Woman

VOICE OF SOUTH GEORGIA UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

S. Ga. Conference UW Faith President's Message

South Georgia women have been organized for mission since 1879. That is remarkable and quite the legacy! And we continue to reach out to women with the invitation to join us in the journey of caring for the needs of women, children, and youth here and around the world.

One cannot deny the bumps we've encountered the last several years. I am proud of the women of South Georgia who have continued to support United Women in Faith. In doing so, we have been a part of a sisterhood that has provided opportunities for women to gather, grow, lead, learn, share, and serve.

Here in South Georgia, we have joined with other groups to lend support to three National Mission Institutions: Open Door Community House in Columbus, the Vashti Center in Thomasville, and Wesley Community Centers in Savannah. We must continue that support. Due to decreased areas of support, our NMIs are in great need. They are doing amazing work and we are blessed to have a part in what they are doing. I encourage you to visit their websites and find ways to share their work (odch.org; vashti.org; wesleysav.org) and encourage others to give.

In the introduction to the 2023 Annual Report of United Women in Faith, CEO/General Secretary Sally Vonner shared: "While paths that may have once felt easy now seem filled with obstacles, instead of being mired in frustration let us instead look for the direction in which God is pushing us to go."

United Women in Faith and its predecessor organizations survived previous obstacles because of their unwavering faith in God and their belief that God guided them in their service. They were not deterred by those who said "it can't be done," "we've never done it that way," "you're only women," or whatever other phrase of the day came their way. They were "unstoppable." With Jesus as their guide for meeting nay-sayers and those resisting change and action, they were bold and courageous. Let us urge ourselves to continue to do the same.

A membership campaign from a few years ago was entitled "Excite and Invite." That is exactly what we must do in this rebuilding phase. We should continue to encourage those whose previous season(s) had obstacles preventing their being a part of our sisterhood. We must share our stories of why we belong. We need to re-energize ourselves and embrace our Mission: **To connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence, and impact local and global communities.**

Our 2025 theme has been "Carrying Our Faith Forward." Our upcoming Conference Annual Meeting will celebrate that theme. Please join us at Hawkinsville United Methodist Church on October 4. We are excited to welcome Bishop Robin Dease as our speaker. Registration will be at 10:30 with worship to begin at 11 AM. The registration fee of \$20 includes lunch, insurance, and programming costs. It is exciting to be meeting at the Hawkinsville church that is celebrating its 200th birthday. Come join us as we embrace "Carrying Our Faith Forward" and continue our ministry with women, children, and youth in South Georgia and beyond.

Tara Jones, President
South Georgia Conference United Women in Faith

Annual Meetings

2025 Conference Annual Meeting



Women across South Georgia will gather at Hawkinsville First United Methodist Church (44 Merritt Street) in Hawkinsville on Saturday, October 4 for the Annual Meeting of United Women in Faith. It's quite special to be with the Hawkinsville folk who have been celebrating 200 years as a congregation. Registration check-in begins at 10:30 AM with the worship beginning at 11:00. The South Georgia Leadership Team is excited to welcome Bishop Robin Dease of the South Georgia Conference United Methodist Church who will give the morning message. Please register online at sgaumc.org/uwf. The registration fee of \$20 includes lunch, insurance, and programming. Your registration will help us in planning lunch.

Other highlights of the day include election of officers, the pledge service, and the celebration of Holy Communion. The Conference budget for 2026 will be adopted. A special part of the day is the opportunity to visit with United Women in Faith sisters from across the Conference.

District Annual Meetings

September is the time for District Annual Meetings. Bi-district annual meetings will begin with **registration at 10:30 AM followed by the meeting at 11 AM**. Highlights of the meeting include the election and installation of district officers, the adoption of the district budget, and setting the district pledge. **Lunch will be served at all district annual meetings** with an opportunity to contribute a donation to help with the lunch cost. **A time of leadership development for local and district officers led by Conference officers will follow lunch. Everyone is invited to participate in this opportunity.**



Coastal/Northeast - September 13

Jesup First United Methodist Church (205 E. Cherry Street)

Speaker: Rev. Lynn Meadows-White

Rev. Lynn Meadows-White serves as the Vice President of Church Relations at the Methodist Home for Children and Youth in Macon. She also serves as the Chaplain for the boys at The Carpenter's Way Ranch in Cautala and for the girls in Americus.



North Central/Northwest - September 20

Epworth United Methodist Church in Columbus (2400 Devonshire Drive)

Speaker: Rev. Earnestine Campbell

The pastor of Epworth United Methodist Church in Columbus, Rev. Earnestine Campbell is a gifted speaker and facilitator. Women of South Georgia United Women in Faith have enjoyed her leadership of our online racial justice book groups.



South Central/Southwest - September 27

The Vashti Center in Thomasville (1815 E. Clay Street)

Speaker: Mrs. Gloria Smith

The women of the South Central and Southwest Districts are excited to welcome author Mrs. Gloria Smith as their speaker. In 2025, she published *Finntown Girl*, a book which draws on her experiences growing up. A former student of Vashti, Mrs. Smith is the wife of a Methodist minister.

Mission u 2025

A sweet spirit filled the room as South Georgia women, youth, and children gathered for a weekend of Practicing Hope Together at Epworth by the Sea on July 18 - 20. There were “signs” of hope everywhere and during the weekend, women, youth, and children created origami butterflies which filled the trees on the worship table and alighted on the table flower arrangements.

Rev. Sara Pugh Montgomery led the study with Melinda Goggins as the pianist. The youth program was led by Amy Utley with Abbe Wright as her assistant. This year, youth from Vashti also attended the weekend program with our South Georgia youth. Dawn Brown with assistant, Raya Schilte, led Bible study and crafts and worked on a musical presentation which was part of the Sunday Worship service.

Over the three days, Rev. Sara led us through the study on Practicing Hope and small group prayer partners shared personal stories of times of loss and finding hope through faith, rituals, family, and observing the wonder of God’s world.

Refugia: A biological term that identifies areas that offer stable environmental conditions during a time of change. An example would be tide pools when the ocean water recedes. What are our places of refuge that offer us a sanctuary during times of change?



Adult Study Leader, Rev. Sara Pugh Montgomery from Centenary Church in Macon.

Below: Dawn Brown and Raya Schilte with the children during craft time..



Musical presentation during Worship Service.



Above (L/R): Courtney Howell, Michelle Reeves, Patsy Thomas, Rev. Christy Bandy, and Michelle King.

Left: Gathering in Nalls auditorium; Eliana Simmons in foreground.



Mission u 2025 ~ Events



Martha Ray



Lovely Lane Chaple in the morning light



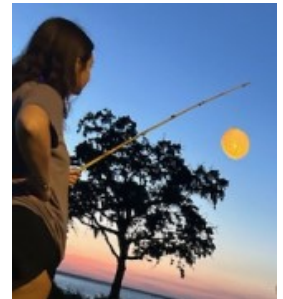
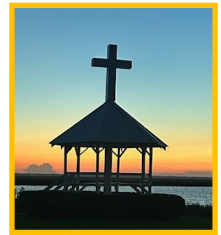
Diane James

Morning Watch: Each morning at Mission u, we gather for prayer and devotion before breakfast. It's a wonderful way to start off a day of marveling at God's beautiful world as the rising sun shines through the beautiful stained glass of Lovely Lane Chapel while one of our ladies brings a thought-provoking message. This year Martha Ray and Diane James provided our devotions.

UW Faith Time: Computers were set up throughout the room so we could practice accessing resources on-line. A handout (see page 5) was developed by Tara Jones who has been a champion of on-line resources.

Candle Burning: Candles were lit in remembrance/honor of loved ones and prayers were lifted up. All money collected went toward our pledge.

Moonlight Walk: On Saturday evening, we proceeded along the riverwalk to gather for a short devotion and song. This year one of our Vashti youth surprised us with a moving rendition of "Alleluia". Money raised went to our 3 South Georgia mission institutions.



Left: Called by Name Candle Burning;

Below: Mission u leadership team and study leaders.


Right: Scenes from Moonlight Walk for Missions.



Mission u 2025 ~ Tech Opportunities Workshop



Voices From the Field is a virtual conversation series featuring leaders sharing their work and life stories and highlights how United Women in Faith initiatives supported by your Mission Giving significantly improve the lives of women, children, and youth around the world. More than 20 episodes are available on our YouTube channel (<https://bit.ly/voices-from-field>) and at uwfaith.org/resources/podcasts. They provide a great way for your circle, unit, church, or friends to learn about how your giving is at work in the world. You can also sign up to receive registration information for live webinars.



mighty

United Women in Faith digital is an online space where you can gather with thousands of sisters and friends from across the church. Set up a free account at uwfaith.org/digital. There's an Open House every other month, during which leaders walk through tips, tricks, and questions for using UWFaith Digital with ease. You can join groups to connect with likeminded women. This works like a social media platform where you can post and chat.



Faith Talks
A United Women in Faith Podcast

Join us for monthly conversations with United Women in Faith with **Faith Talks**. Each month, we'll explore timely themes and resources from expert insights on ways to live your faith to inspiring interviews with spiritual leaders. Past conversations are archived and can be enjoyed when you wish. Sign up at uwfaith.org.



Just Energy for All is United Women in Faith's campaign to work for climate justice and mobilize members and communities to advocate for cleaner, 100% renewable, and just energy - for people and creation. Find resources here and join the effort to advocate for Just Energy for All. Visit uwfaith.org/climate-justice.

National website: uwfaith.org

All Access Member registration

Program Resources (uwfaithresources.org)

Reading Program information (uwfaithresources.org) click on shop all

South Georgia website: sgaumc..org/uwf

Treasurer resources

Reporting forms

Event information & registration

TelAWoman

Email: sgaumw@gmail.com

Contact South Georgia leadership at this address if you have questions or concerns. If you need to contact a Conference or District officer, send us an email and we'll connect you.

Southeast Jurisdiction Director's Message

By Patsy J. Thomas – Director South Georgia Conference.

Greetings from the National Board of Directors.

The approach of fall usually indicates that it's time for Leadership Development Days. Well, LLD is taking a pause this year while United Women in Faith makes some exciting changes in how we support our leaders.

In the meantime, visit uwfaith.org/members-and-leaders/officer-toolkit/ for all the information you and your leadership team need to grow and strengthen your leadership skills.



As we are preparing to close our year, please consider adding a few extra dollars toward mission giving. Also consider supporting our three National Mission Institutes with your time and resources. The agencies are –

Open Door Community House at 2405 2nd Ave, Columbus, GA 31901

Phone: (706) 323-5518 or visit the website at <https://www.odch.org/>

The Vashti Center for Children and Families at 1815 E Clay St, Thomasville, GA 31792

Phone (229) 226-4634 or visit the website at <https://www.vashti.org/>

Wesley Communities Centers of Savannah, Inc at 1601 Drayton St, Savannah, GA 31401

Phone (912) 232-0965 or visit the website at <https://www.wesleysav.org/>

Other news of interest to South Georgia –

Early Bird registration for Assembly 2026 opens Sept. 1st and continues through Nov. 30th. Assembly is May 15-17, 2026 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Be sure you're connected to receive United Women in Faith notifications.

The **Book Review committee** continues to read books to be considered for inclusion on the 2026 Reading List. The Board of Directors will make the final decision at the 2026 spring meeting. The book list will be released in mid-2026.

The adult curriculum theme for Mission u 2026 is "A Deep Knowing: Experiencing Emmanuel Through Every Part of Our Lives." The youth curriculum is "Experiencing Emmanuel." **Make plans NOW to attend Mission u in 2026 at Epworth by The Sea.**

In September, I'm flying to Chicago to represent the United Women in Faith Board of Directors at the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women Board of Directors meeting.

Until next time, please remember your voice, thoughts, concerns, and questions matter to me. Please feel free to contact me via email at pjthomas06@gmail.com

United Women in Faith

ASSEMBLY 2026

May 15-17, 2026
Indianapolis, Indiana

uwfaith.org/assembly

**Dream it!
Believe it!
Do it!**

UWFaith Spiritual Growth Retreat ~ 2026

Mark your calendars for the Spiritual Growth UWFaith conference meeting at beautiful Epworth by the Sea on March 20-22, 2026! If you haven't attended an event at Epworth by the Sea on Saint Simons Island, you are in for a treat!

The facility is owned by the Methodist church and every time I have attended an event there, it has been so inspiring to see all the young people gathering among the adults in the dining rooms. Their energy is contagious and heartwarming.

We are so fortunate to have a location so important to John Wesley's time in Georgia and right next to the beautiful marshes of St. Simons Island. Don't forget to visit the museum while you are on break from the meetings as they have wonderful displays to experience. See papier-mache figures in museum (below).



Make plans to join your UWFaith members at the 2026 spiritual growth retreat March 20-22 and be rejuvenated in your faith by wonderful speakers and music.

The retreat center features double beds, great food, opportunities to worship in the chapel on Sunday and time for personal spiritual growth among the beautiful oak trees with hanging moss.

You will receive more info about registration for the retreat and for housing. All UWFaith members are encouraged to attend.



Martha Ray

South Georgia UWFaith Spiritual Growth Coordinator

Social Issues Workshop

The Trauma-Informed Care Social Issues Workshop was held at The Methodist Children's Home (MCH) in Macon on August 2, 2025. To help us understand childhood trauma, Speaker Jill Myers focused her presentation on the effect of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on children's development. Jill has 30 years of experience with MCH working with children affected by traumatic events and currently serves as the MCH Executive VP.

ACEs include divorce; homelessness; emotional, physical, or sexual abuse; experience with parents affected by substance abuse, mental illness, or incarceration. Children who experience four or more ACEs are more likely to have mental and emotional developmental problems as a result of "toxic stress". In addition, community experiences (poverty, poor housing, violence, etc.) or environmental events (natural disasters like tornados or hurricanes) increase the negative effect of ACEs on children.

The MCH works to provide stability and support/counseling for children in a caring environment so they can begin to thrive despite the childhood trauma events they experienced.

For the second year, the North Georgia and South Georgia met together for the Social Issues Workshop. After a wonderful lunch catered by the MCH staff, the ladies made cards of praise and encouragement to be given to the children. MCH has facilities that serve children in Macon, Columbus, Valdosta, and St. Marys.



Ladies from South Georgia Conference of United Women in Faith.

District News (SW/SC and NE/Coastal)

Who says different generations can't have a fun day together? Students at the Vashti Center in Thomasville were treated to ice cream with all the fixings and rounds of Bingo at the **Southwest/South Central District** Vashti Fun Day on June 26. Southwest members have been enjoying this event for several years. This year they were joined by women of the South Central District. The group was greeted by Vashti chaplain Rev. Donald Mathis who was recently appointed by the South Georgia Conference. Other Vashti staff were able to join the day's activities. Adults partnered with the youth to watch Bingo cards fill up so that prizes could be awarded.

What began in 1903 as a center to serve young girls, the Vashti Center serves more than 300 children and their families throughout southwest Georgia. United Women in Faith continues to provide support to the Center. The mission of the Vashti Center is "With God as our cornerstone, we foster healing, hope, and transformation to empower and promote resiliency in children, families, and communities in Georgia." You are invited to attend next year's Vashti Fun Day. In the meantime, call the folks at Vashti, plan a Thomasville adventure and bring your group along. Learn about the mission of an incredible National Mission Institution firsthand.



Southwest/South Central District ladies posed in front of the Vashti "butterfly" in the social hall where ice cream and Bingo was enjoyed by all!

The **Northeast/Coastal District** ladies gathered at the Mission u Communion table.



Northeast/Coastal District ladies attended Mission u. Pictured above are (L to R):

Barbara Fisher,
Becky Holmes,
Beth Stapleton,
Martha Ray,
Pat Carmichael,
Vicki Freeman,
Kathy Harrell, and
Michelle Reeves

District News (Northwest/North Central)

NORTH CENTRAL/NORTHWEST DISTRICT: I'm excited to announce that the combined North Central/Northwest District is "jelling." In fact, we don't seem to have missed a beat since our change. As noted in the pictures below, we had good attendance at Mission u and even better attendance at the Social Issues Workshop held on August 2nd at the Methodist Home. Our district had the largest attendance of any of the districts. That speaks volumes for the ladies in our district.

On September 20th, we will hold our first combined district meeting at Epworth United Methodist Church in Columbus, GA. Rev. Ernestine Campbell, who is no stranger to United Women in Faith, will be our guest speaker. You are invited to join us for a day of celebration and remembrance.

BITS OF WISDOM: You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person. Do not cry because it is over, smile because it happened. Everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler. A happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour. Happiness sometimes comes through doors you did not even know you left open. Once over the hill, you pick up speed. (From House to House.com)



NW/NC women at Mission u (L to R, above) Karen Hartin, Becky Britton, Lynn Harper, Tricia Humphry, Patsy Thomas, Agnes McKinney, Rev. Sara Pugh Montgomery (study leader from Macon), Cheryl King, and Sara Bankhead



Pierce Chapel Circle sponsored a lunch for their Pre-School teachers.



Women of the NW/NC Districts were well represented at the Social Issues Workshop held in Macon at the Methodist Children's Home.

Reports ~ Nominations

SGA Committee on Nominations Report 2025

Report of the Committee on Nominations

President	Jeanne Lindsey	Valdosta	South Central
Secretary	Paula Shaw-Powell	Columbus	Northwest
Communications	Shelley Mitchell	Valdosta	South Central
Social Action	Sonya Aldridge	Pavo	Southwest
Chair, Nominations	Denise Rooks	Baxley	South Central
Member, CoN	Janice Ramsey	Columbus	Northwest
Member, CoN	Connie Boole	Savannah	Coastal
Member, CoN	Vacant		

Submitted by South Georgia United Women in Faith Committee on Nominations: Paula Shaw-Powell (Chairperson), Shirley Johnson, Helen Smith, Laurie Jo Upchurch

Those continuing to serve:

Treasurer	Diane James	Blakely	Southwest
Education & Interpretation	Becky Britton	Columbus	Northwest
Spiritual Growth	Martha Ray	Statesboro	Northeast
Member, CoN	Helen Smith	Sylvester	Southwest

Director
(elected by SEJ, serving 2025-2028)

Patsy Thomas

Columbus

Northwest

Time flies when you're having fun!!! The Committee on Nominations members, Laurie Jo Upchurch, Helen Smith and myself have been working hard to provide a proposed slate of officers for 2026. However, I want to remind you that this committee has the ongoing task of continuing to promote and identify new leadership for UWF. To that end, we want to encourage you to contact us if you are interested in serving on the Conference Level. WE NEED YOU! On our SGA website (sgaumc.org/uwf), there is an Opportunities for Leadership Survey in the Forms section that we encourage you to complete. AGAIN, the Women, Children, and Youth of South Georgia need you!!!!

Paula Shaw-Powell, SGA Chair of Committee on Nominations

Reports

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer's Report

To date, \$24,784 has been collected toward our \$30,200 conference pledge. Of this amount, \$20,040 (or 66% of our pledge) has been forwarded to National as of August. In addition, designated funds of \$3,494 have been sent to National. The designated funds included \$1,075 that was raised during the Mission u Moonlight Walk to support our three South Georgia mission institutions—Open Door, Vasti, and Wesley Community Center.

Diane James, Treasurer

South Georgia Conference UWFaith



Online Forms Make Reporting Easier

We've taken steps to make local unit reporting an easy process. Online forms are available on the Conference webpage (sgaumc.org/uwf). For recognition at the district annual meeting, please complete the forms by **September 10**. The following online forms are available:

- 2025 Mission u report
- 2025 Group Mission Today
- 2025 Deceased Member Recognition
- 2025 Reading Program participation
- Local unit leadership



In addition to the forms traditionally requested for the district annual meetings, there are 2 additional forms that will help us in planning. These 2 forms are accessible by links on the main page of South Georgia United Women in Faith:

- Unit/Group registration
- Individual Member registration

Please contact us at sgaumw@gmail.com if you have concerns or questions. Thank you for all the many ways that you make mission possible in South Georgia and around the world.

UWFaith Reading Program Resources

The reading program catalog and reporting forms are available for download from the UW Faith Resources page at www.uwfaithresources.org (Path: Explore > Educate > Reading Program).

The 2025 Reading Program book list for 2020-2025 is presented as an Excel document which can be searched, filtered, and/or sorted.

When you purchase books through Bookshop.org, 10% of the purchase will go to support United Women in Faith. (www.bookshop.org/shop/uwfaith). Screen shot sample below.



United Women in Faith

POWERED BY Bookshop.org

2025 Reading Program Books



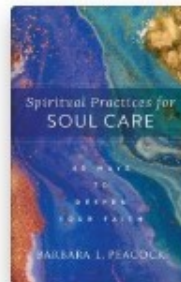
by United Women in Faith



We Are Not Here to Be Bystanders: A Memoir of Lov...

Linda Sarsour

\$16.73 ~~\$17.99~~



Spiritual Practices for Soul Care: 40 Ways to Deepe...

Barbara L. Peacock

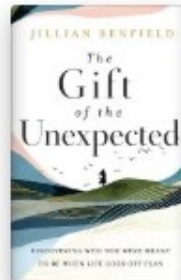
\$17.66 ~~\$18.99~~



The Women of the Bible Speak: The Wisdom of 16 Women and...

Shannon Bream

\$25.10 ~~\$26.99~~



The Gift of the Unexpected: Discovering Who You Were...

Jillian Benfield

\$16.73 ~~\$17.99~~

SGC UWFaith 2025 Leadership Team ~ Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting

- October 4
- Hawkinsville UMC
- Speaker: Bishop Dease
- Registration fee \$20
- Registration begins 10:30

District Meetings

Northwest / North Central

- September 13
- Jesup FUMC
- Rev. Lynn Meadows-White
- Registration begins 10:30

Coastal / Northeast

- September 20
- Epworth UMC, Columbus
- Rev. Earnestine Campbell
- Registration begins 10:30

Southwest / South Central

- September 27
- Vashti, Thomasville, GA
- Mrs. Gloria Smith
- Registration begins 10:30

President

Tara Jones

Secretary

Open

Treasurer

Diane James

Program Resources

Open

**Communications
Coordinator**

Jeanne Lindsey

**Chairperson, Committee
on Nominations**

Paula Shaw-Powell

MISSION COORDINATORS

Education / Interpretation

Becky Britton

Spiritual Growth

Martha Ray

Social Action

Sylvia Copp

DISTRICT PRESIDENTS

Coastal/Northeast

Kathy Harrell

North Central/Northwest

Lynn Harper

Southwest/South Central

Sonya Aldridge

Contact South Georgia UWFaith

Email: sgaumw@gmail.com

Website: www.sgaumc.org/uwf

Pray “blessings” for those you love and for those “blessed” by UWFaith

B – Body: Pray for health and healing, for “daily bread” and physical needs.

L – Labors: Pray for God’s help in their work, school, and daily tasks.

E – Emotional Needs: Pray for comfort, reassurance, hope, joy, peace, and comfort.

S – Social Needs: Pray for healthy relationships with family, friends, and associates.

S – Spiritual Needs: Pray for continually deepening relationships with God.