

1 **Florida Conference United Women in Faith**
2 **49th Conference Annual Meeting**
3 **First Lakeland United Methodist Church**
4 **Moving Forward in Faith**
5 **Saturday, November 19, 2022**
6 10:00 a.m.

7
8 **Call to order/Welcome/Introductions/Purpose.**
9

10 Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson, Conference President, called the meeting to order and welcomed
11 participants to the 49th Annual Meeting of the Florida Conference, and the first since we became
12 United Women in Faith. The District presidents were invited to stand as they were introduced:
13 Anne Winn - East Central, Shari Gillis - Gulf Central, Jane Darling - North Central, Nora Hendrix
14 – South East, Veta Daley – South West, Gwen Dixon – North West. (Kim Wendt – Atlantic Central
15 and Mozelle Thomas – North East were unable to attend). The Florida Conference Officers were
16 also recognized including Donna Spear-Treasurer, Mary Van Tol – Secretary, Jackie Brooks –
17 Secretary for Program Resources, Ester Kim – Chair on Nominations, Edith Zawadski-Bricker –
18 Social Action Liaison, Linda Parrish – Dean Mission u, Rev. Debbie Keller Allen – Cabinet
19 Liaison. (Natacha Etienne Joseph – Haitian Language Coordinator was unable to attend.) Also
20 introduced were members serving beyond the Conference which included Kay Roach –
21 Southeastern Jurisdiction Vice President, Jennfer Noel – Program Advisory Group Member and
22 Magdala Fleurimond – Director of the National Organization. She then recognized members
23 serving on the Committee on Nominations serving with Ester Kim: Annie Woods, Mary Reed,
24 Annette Samuel, Ethel Ewing, Paulette Royes-Neale, Gail Donley and Cilianne Louis.

25
26 Janet Blume, East Central District Secretary, was recognized for her work as our Conference
27 webmaster.

28
29 Also recognized were the presidents of our predecessor organization attending the meeting.

30 Kay Roach 2016-2019

31 Nelida Morales 2010-2013

32 Paulette Monroe 2006-2009

33 Gail Christy-Jones 2002-2005

34 Annie Woods 1998-2001

35 Dorothy Collins 1990-1993

36 Ms. Liz Johnson – Women Society of Christian Service in the Central Jurisdiction

37
38 Other introductions included first timers, Conference Co Lay leaders Alice Williams and Derrick
39 Scott and Sally Vonner, our guest speaker.

40
41 Highlighting President Judith's welcome, she noted the hardships and setbacks we've experienced
42 over the last several years. She noted this was the first in person annual meeting since 2019. We
43 have lost three past conference presidents and suffered loss of life and hardships in the state due
44 to hurricane Ian in September which affected 150 of our churches and communities in the South
45 West, North East and Gulf Central districts. Although we have all suffered in some way this past
46 year, Judith ended her welcome with an encouraging statement saying "We have come together

47 today to experience the power of our sisterhood: but more importantly we are here to acknowledge
48 our oneness in Christ as we are united by our faith in God's promises, our Hope in salvation, and
49 our commitment to turn our love into action on behalf of women, children and all those who are
50 marginalized in the world." The welcome ended with all reciting the Purpose of United Women
51 in Faith.

52

53 **Special Greetings**

54 Meridith Kehler, Unit President, First United Methodist Church, Lakeland was unable to attend
55 the meeting. Vice President Alice Warren welcomed everyone in her place. She was given a Gift
56 to Mission (GTM) Thank You card.

57 Reverend David McEntire, Senior Pastor, First United Methodist Church welcome us as well, and
58 announced he would be retiring in December.

59

60 Alice Williams and Derrick Scott, Board of Lay Leaders, Florida Annual Conference, spoke about
61 the four Ps for Laity which include: Purpose, Presence, Partnership and Passion. Alice noted that
62 since last year's Annual meeting, she decided to become a member of United Women in Faith for
63 the first time after seeing how our fellowship partnered with missions both locally and around the
64 world. She also announced that four Bishops recently retired, and Bishop Ken Carter will be
65 retiring from serving the Florida Conference but will stay on as Bishop for the North Carolina
66 Conference. Reverend Tom Berlin will be serving as the new Florida Conference Bishop. He and
67 his wife, Karen, are looking forward to coming to Florida. Both Derrick Scott and Alice Williams
68 received a GTM card.

69

70 **Daily Prayer Guide**

71 Ethel Ewing, Committee on Nominations member, presented the Daily Prayer Guide.

72

73 **Video Greetings**

74 Bishop Ken Carter greeted us and gave a special thanks for all the work our members have done
75 throughout this past year.

76

77 **Scripture Reading Proverbs 4:25 (NLT) read in:**

78

79 Creole by Cilianne Louis, Haitian Language Coordinator

80 Korean by Julie Yo, Member, United Women in Faith Gulf Central District

81 Spanish by Maria Escobales, Member United Women in Faith Gulf Central District

82 English by Annie Woods, Member, Conference Committee on Nominations

83

84 President Judith presented Julie Yo and Maria Escobales with a GTM card.

85

86 **Invocation**

87 Rev. David McEntire gave the invocation. He was then given a Special Mission Recognition
88 (SMR) pin and thank you from President Judith.

89

90 **Memorial Service "Dawning of a New Day"**

91 *From Ceremonies II: A Collection of Worship for United Methodist Women written by Ruby Horse,*
92 *Former Women's Division Director and adapted by Deaconess Judith Pierre-Okerson.*

93 Jane Darling, East Central District president began the ceremony with the list of members who
94 have died since our last Annual Meeting. The following women participated as readers in the
95 ceremony: Nora Hernandez Hendrix, Sharyn Ladner, Veta Daley and Anne Winn.

96 List of districts with numbers passing:

97 Atlantic Central-0, East Central-17, Gulf Central-48, North Central-7, North East-15, North West-
98 11, South East-21, South West-16

99

100 Jackie Bridges led a Tribute to Ressie Mae Bass, Former Conference President by mentioning
101 stories of their service together. Judith presented Jackie with a GTM card.

102

103 **Telling Our Stories:**

104

105 **Through Giving**

106 Donna Spear, Conference Treasurer, spoke about the five channels of giving and presented the
107 awards. She concluded her talk by asking the members present to encourage their members to give
108 whatever they can by the end of this year. SMR pins were given to Annie Samuels and Mary Reed
109 for their completing their terms as members of the Conference on Nominations Committee. A love
110 offering to support our mission was then taken by the members present.

111

112 **Through Action**

113 Edith Zewadski-Bricker, Conference Social Action Liaison, showed a short video demonstrating
114 how the School to Prison Pipeline has affected youth of today. President Judith narrated this video
115 and shared her own anguish after seeing one of her students thrown on the floor, handcuffed and
116 arrested during class. The video demonstrated how two different schools handled the same
117 situation: in one school the students were arrested and sent to prison, in the other school authorities
118 just called the parents.

119

120 Edith shared a personal story about her daughter Annabelle when she was in eighth grade and had
121 a friend who was accused of a bomb threat. When Edith learned the family was designated as
122 dysfunctional, and the girl had just transferred from another school, she contacted an attorney as
123 she felt the girl was innocent. The girl was later exonerated from any involvement, and the school
124 learned upon further investigation the perpetrator was from a prominent family in the community
125 demonstrating how injustice must be witnessed for us to be called into action.

126

127 **Building the Next 150 Years' Mission Stories**

128 Pamela Sue Davis, Chair Conference Legacy Committee asked Donna Spear to present her part in
129 the program as she had no voice due to a cold. She spoke about the importance of continuing the
130 work of our organization by giving to the Legacy Fund. She presented stories and pictures of our
131 last Mission u held in July and stressed how our giving through this fund will help to continue the
132 work our organization does in the future. This year there was a fund raiser at Mission u where
133 \$2,400 was raised for the Legacy fund. The goal for the Legacy Fund is 60 million dollars, and
134 has reached just over 40 million dollars so far. She ended her talk with the reminder that March
135 23, 2023, is designated by National as a Day of Giving and asked everyone to share that with their
136 District members.

137

138 **Introduction of Speaker**

139 President Judith introduced the guest speaker, Sally Vonner, National Transformation Officer.
140 Sally Vonner spoke about our theme, “Moving Forward in Faith” highlighting how changes were
141 made to enable our organization to grow and keep women involved in our mission. She emphasized
142 the role to keep women engaged, be willing to accept change as the world has changed, and to
143 learn from the past but keep looking forward by answering God’s call to help those in need. As a
144 transformational officer, Sally explained how many of the changes in the branding of United
145 Women in Faith were decided and the amount of time and effort that was involved to release these
146 changes. She emphasized that our organization is still legally registered as United Methodist
147 Women doing business as United Women in Faith. This may change sometime in the future, but a
148 lot of financial work needs to be done before that happens. Sally also reminded the women that all
149 Districts and Units should finish converting from the United Methodist Women name to the new
150 United Women in Faith name by March 2023 which coincides with the one year ago announcement
151 of the new branding. President Judith presented Sally with a SMR pin. Sally then said a lunch
152 blessing before we broke for lunch.

153

154 After the lunch break, Lyn Sears led the women in the song learned at Assembly called “Turn it
155 Up.” A short video welcome was given by Harriet Jane Olsen, National CEO/General Secretary
156 who will be retiring this year.

157

158 **New Wineskin Celebration**

159 Ruth Fleurimond, South West District Spiritual Growth Leader and Jennifer Noel, Member
160 Program Advisory Board presented a PowerPoint presentation sent by National about the branding
161 and all the changes that have been made this past year. Ruth was presented with a GTM card by
162 President Judith.

163

164 **Business Meeting**

165 President Judith called the business meeting to order. She stated that according to our Standing
166 Rules, all registered participants are eligible to vote. She also appointed Jean Vanderslice to serve
167 as parliamentarian for the session and asked for approval from the members. Jean was then
168 approved by a voice vote of those present. Ester Kim and Linda Cook were appointed by President
169 Judith to review and approve the minutes for this meeting. All members present approved.

170

171 Mary Van Tol, Conference Secretary took the Roll Call:

172 Atlantic Central – 5, East Central – 24, Gulf Central- 45, North Central – 13, North East – 10,
173 North West – 6, South East – 47, South West – 11.

174

175 President Judith announced that the minutes from the 48th Annual Meeting were approved by the
176 Leadership Team and were published on our website prior to this meeting.

177

178 Donna Spear presented a financial report for 2021 which is attached to these minutes. In summary:

179

| | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 180 | Conference Pledge: | \$325,000.00 | |
| 181 | SEJ Pledge: | \$3,500.00 | |
| 182 | AM&D Budgeted 2021: | \$181,824.50 | |
| 183 | Total 2021 Budget: | \$510,000.00 | |
| 184 | Mission Giving Received: | \$279,074.99 | Dispersed: \$279,074.99 |

185

186 The proposed budget for 2023 included the amounts below:

| | | |
|-----|--------------------|--------------|
| 187 | Conference Pledge: | \$250,000.00 |
| 188 | SEJ Pledge: | 2,500.00 |
| 189 | AM&D: | \$156,135.00 |
| 190 | Total 2023 Budget: | \$408,635.00 |

191

192 President Judith announced the proposed 2023 Budget came to us as a recommendation of the

193 Finance Committee and the Conference Leadership Team. She then asked if there were any

194 questions. As there were none, a vote was taken and the 2023 Budget was approved. The complete

195 list for both the Financial Report and 2023 Budget is listed in the Annual Meeting Program which

196 is attached to this document.

197

198 Ester Kim, Chair on Nominations recommended Paulette Monroe and Linda Rush to serve on

199 Nominations Class of 2026. Their bios were listed in the Genesis newsletter last month and on our

200 website. President Judith then asked if there were any nominations from the floor and hearing

201 none, closed the nominations for the Class of 2026. Both women were approved by a voice vote

202 from the registered members present. President Judith then thanked Ester and her committee for

203 the work they did and asked God to give them wisdom as they began the task of filling the 2024-

204 26 slate of officers. When asked, Secretary Mary Van Tol stated there was no further business to

205 discuss. President Judith thanked Jean and presented her with a GTM card. She then concluded

206 the business portion of the meeting.

207

208 Sally Vonner installed the Committee on Nominations Class of 2026 using the verse from

209 Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. If

210 either fall down, one can help.” Although Paulette Monroe was present, Linda Rush was unable to

211 attend but was installed in absentia.

212

213 **Celebrating The Local Units’ Accomplishments in 2021-2022**

214 Jackie Brooks, Secretary for Program Resources announced that the Shalom House of Grace Unit

215 in the South East District is the first new group chartered under the United Women in Faith Florida

216 Conference. A GTM card was presented to them which Nora Hendrix, South East District president

217 accepted.

218

219 **Mission Today Units:**

| | | |
|-----|---------------|----------------------------|
| 220 | East Central | Bronze 7, Participation 5 |
| 221 | Gulf Central | Gold 2, Silver 3, |
| 222 | North Central | Silver 6, Bronze 2 |
| 223 | North West | Silver 4 |
| 224 | South East | Gold 4. Silver 2, Bronze 3 |
| 225 | South West | Gold 2, Silver 6 |

226

227 **Mission Studies**

228 *Women United for Change: 150 Years in Mission*

229 East Central

230 *Push Out: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*

231 North Central & South West
 232 *Finding Peace in an Anxious World*
 233 Gulf Central and North Central
 234 *Bearing Witness for the Kin-dom*
 235 Gulf Central, East Central, South East, South West

236
 237 **The Reading Program:**

| 238 District | Plan I | Plan II | Plan III | Plan IV |
|----------------------|--------|---------|----------|---------|
| 239 Atlantic Central | 28 | 9 | 8 | 4 |
| 240 East Central | 27 | 8 | 8 | 5 |
| 241 Gulf Central | 19 | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| 242 North Central | 12 | 6 | 3 | 5 |
| 243 North East | 8 | 11 | 5 | |
| 244 North West | 4 | 1 | 1 | |
| 245 South East | 18 | 2 | | |
| 246 South West | 10 | 8 | 2 | 2 |

247
 248 **Announcements – Looking Toward the Future**

249 Magalie Francois, Member United Women in Faith, South East District announced the date of the
 250 2023 Haitian Convocation is March 11 at Ft. Pierce Haitian Church. Tickets are \$20 and Tee shirts
 251 are \$10.00.

252
 253 Linda Parrish, Dean, Mission u announced Mission u will be held in a hotel at Lake Mary on July
 254 14-16. The Virtual session date is TBD.

255
 256 Kay Roach, Vice President, Southeastern Jurisdiction announced the cancellation of the original
 257 date for SEJ in 2024 due to the General Conference to be held on their original date in April. They
 258 still hope to have it in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

259
 260 **Communion Service**

261 The hymn “Let Us Break Bread Together” was led by Lyn Sears. Reverend Debbie Keller Allen,
 262 South West District Superintendent and United Women in Faith Cabinet Liaison led us in a
 263 meditation before celebrating Communion along with Rev. David McEntire. After the Communion
 264 service, President Judith presented Rev. Debbie Allen with a GTM card.

265
 266 **Evaluation Reminder** – Judith reminded everyone that an evaluation will be emailed to them and
 267 to fill it out so we can use it to plan next year’s event.

268
 269 **Sending Forth**

270 President Judith gave closing remarks and thanked Rev. David McEntire for his continued support
 271 to the organization and wished him well for his retirement at the end of this year. The following
 272 people were thanked for helping with the event: Lyn Sears, song leader, and Judi LeVan, stage
 273 manager, received GTM cards. Mathew Corl, organist, and Shawn Joyner, tech support each
 274 received a monetary honorarium. President Judith then adjourned the 49th Conference Annual
 275 Meeting of United Women in Faith.

276

277 Adjourned at 2:45 PM
278 Mary Van Tol, Secretary Florida Conference United Women in Faith

279
280 **COMMITTEE APPROVAL OF THESE CAM MINUTES**
281

282 *Linda Cook* 01/30/2023

283 Linda Cook Date

284
285 Minutes Approved as Written Minutes Approved as Corrected X

286
287 *Ester Kim* 01/30/2023

288 Ester Kim Date

289
290 Minutes Approved as Written Minutes Approved as Corrected X