

Florida Conference United Women in Faith

**51st Conference Annual Meeting
First Lakeland United Methodist Church
“Remind, Restore, Refresh”
Saturday, November 9, 2024
10:00 a.m.**

Call to order/Welcome/Introductions/Purpose

Linda Parrish, Conference President, welcomed attendees to the 51st Annual Meeting of the Florida Conference. She thanked Faniel Pradel for providing us with music today. She then called the 51st (3rd United Women in Faith) Annual Meeting of the Florida Conference to order. She then welcomed special guests including Bishop Tom Berlin, Rev. Dr. Simon Osunlana, South East District Superintendent, first time attendees and past president Kay Roach, pastors, deaconesses and lay leaders. She announced that Past President Dollie Watkins Crist passed away this year.

The district presidents were invited to stand as they were introduced: Janet Blume - East Central, Shari Gillis - Gulf Central, Mozelle Thomas - North East, Dr. Nora Hernandez Hendrix – South East, Beverly Emond – South West, and Dr. Gwen Dixon – North West. Due to the redistricting of the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, Jane Darling from the former North Central district and Kathy Megerle from the former Atlantic Central district were recognized for their service as well.

Florida Conference Officers were also recognized including Ester Kim – Vice President, Donna Spear - Treasurer, Mary Van Tol – Secretary, Jackie Brooks – Secretary for Program Resources, Paulette Monroe – Chair of Committee on Nominations, Ann Eachus – Social Action Liaison, Dr. Nora Hernandez Hendrix – Dean Mission u (2022-2024), Rev. Catherine Fluck-Price (unable to attend today) – Cabinet Liaison, Rendy Blanchard – Haitian Language Coordinator, Angela Kim – Spanish Language Coordinator. Mae Griner, serving on the Program Advisory Group, was also introduced as serving beyond the Conference on the National Board. She then recognized members serving on the Committee on Nominations with Paulette Monroe: Mary Reed, Ethel Diehl, Gail Donley, Linda Rush, Veta Daley. Ciliane Louis and Judi Levan were unable to attend.

Linda then led the attendees in reciting The United Women in Faith Purpose.

Meridith Kehler, First Lakeland Unit President, welcomed the attendees. Their unit provided table decorations, greeters and helpers for the day. Tickets for a door prize (gift certificate for their gift shop) were handed out at check in, and Meridith announced the winner during her greeting.

A special greeting from Sally Vonner, General Secretary and CEO was read by Linda Parrish thanking everyone for their support and encouragement during her first year in office. She quoted Proverbs 4:25: “Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you,” supporting and being in mission with women, children, and youth for generations to come. We are influencers and inspirers!”

Daily Prayer Guide

Dr. Gwen Dixon read from the Daily Prayer Guide comparing this book to the many devotional books available today. Not only does this Guide keep us rooted in scriptures and prayer, but it is also a daily reminder of who we are and the reasons we do what we do as an organization. Highlighted this week was the Neighborhood Center of the United Methodist Church in Harrisburg, PA. Scholarship recipients, Rimla Ejaz Gul (Pakistan premed student) and Kinya Ruth Munene (Kenya BS in IT student). This past week's birthdays and mission institutions were also honored.

Scripture Reading Matthew 5:13 (NIV)

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. Little children let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth."

Read in:

Spanish – Angela Kim, Spanish Language Coordinator
Korean – Ester Kim, Vice President
Creole – Rendi Blanchard, Haitian Language Coordinator
English – Janet Blume, East Central District President

Invocation: Rev. Dr. Simon Osunlana, gave a special message based on today's scripture reading. He focused on Salt and Light and told us we were "different" by being a light to others with our actions and were to preserve our faith as salt is a preservative.

Memorial Service

Paulette Monroe led the ceremony for all those who passed since our last annual meeting in November 2023. A special tribute to Dollie Watkins Crist was given. A white candle was lit in remembrance of her acts of service and labors of love through serving over 52 years in her church, United Methodist Women (both locally in our Conference and the Women's Division National Office), Board of Global Ministries, and CROS Ministries. Linda Parrish received a white rose in a vase in remembrance of Dollie.

As each district name was called, the District Presidents were given a red rose in a vase to commemorate the women. These included the following numbers:

East Central - 12, Gulf Central - 9, North East -6, North West -12, South East - 29, South West -4.

Guest Speaker

President Linda Parrish introduced our guest speaker, Bishop Tom Berlin of the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church. His message highlighted our "salt of the earth" scripture. His talk focused on our Purpose as he compared us to the disciples when Jesus said they were the salt of the earth. Salt is needed and used as both a preservative and for our bodies to work. He spoke about his daughter's salt disorder which caused her to pass out if she didn't get enough salt and compared it to women who don't have Christ in their heart to show us how to be in mission with love, compassion, and the other fruits of the spirit. The epidemic of loneliness is rampant throughout our world today and as United Women in Faith we have the potential to bring hope to the hopeless, love to the unloved and purpose to those looking for one. Bishop Berlin also spoke about all the mission projects United Women in Faith has done and

continues to do around the country and the world and encouraged us to keep engaging in our mission purpose with love and the word of Jesus Christ.

Offering “Through Giving”

Donna Spear presented the awards for the 5-Star units and Rainbow Givers and spoke about the five channels of giving. She reported that in 2023 there were 48 5-Star Units and 83 Rainbow givers. Donna then reminded us how the money we donate helps not only our local ministries but also women nationally and internationally. The video “Give Bravely” about mission giving was played and an offering for Mission Giving was taken.

“Through Action”

Ann Eachus, Social Action Liaison spoke about the priority issue for United Women in Faith which has focused on interrupting the School to Prison Pipeline. She highlighted sections from our Charter for Racial Justice. This past year our Conference had members who make doll clothes for multicultural dolls which were on display both on the altar and in the social hall for everyone to see. Over 100 dolls and dozens of books were collected that will be given to Cornerstone Family Ministries in Tampa, Wesley House in Key West, and other preschools around the state. A blessing of the dolls and singing the song “Jesus loves the little children” was led by Ann.

“Through Legacy”

Pam Davis, Conference Legacy Liaison spoke about the future of United Women in Faith and how giving to the Legacy Endowment Fund insures we can continue to provide a bold and strong initiative that impacts women, children and youth. She reported that the Florida Conference has given nearly \$331,000 since the fund was started in 2019. The National Goal is \$65 million by 2029. So far they have raised \$24 million.

Lunch break was from Noon until 1:30 PM

Pam Davis said a blessing for lunch.

Business Meeting

President Linda Parrish called to order the business session of our meeting at 1:30 pm.

Mary Van Tol, Conference Secretary took the Roll Call:

East Central – 23, Gulf Central- 32, North East – 9, North West – 16, South East – 24, South West –5.

President Linda Parrish announced that the minutes from the 50th Annual Meeting were approved by the Leadership Team and were published on our website prior to this meeting. She called for acceptance from the members present. A copy of the minutes is in the appendix.

Linda stated that according to our standing rules, the voting body of our Annual Meeting shall be composed of all United Women in Faith members of the Florida Conference who are duly registered for the event. She asked for approval of her appointment of Janet Blume as parliamentarian. There were no oppositions or abstentions, therefore she was approved.

Janet thanked everyone and reminded them of the procedure for being recognized by the chair for questions or comments. Everyone was also informed about the procedure for nominating

someone from the floor. They must have tenure and accepted the nomination before the meeting.

Linda appointed Janet Blume and Ester Kim to review and present the minutes of the 51st Annual Meeting to the Conference Leadership Team for approval. She then asked for a show of hands and they were approved.

Donna Spear presented the Treasurer's Report and noted that many churches have disaffiliated, and many women decided to stay with their congregations and leave our organization. While some have stayed members some pastors have told them they cannot contribute to our mission giving resulting in a reduction in our pledge to Mission for next year.

A summary of the 2024 Remitted:

Conference Pledge:	\$ 200,225.70
Call to Prayer and Self Denial:	\$ 8,449.88
UWinFaith Projects:	\$ 1,053.18
SEJ Pledge:	\$ 2,500.00
AM&D:	\$ 95,984.85

The proposed budget for 2025 included the amounts below:

Conference Pledge:	\$ 150,000.00
SEJ Pledge:	\$ 1,500.00
AM&D:	\$ 117,885.00
Total 2025 Budget:	\$ 269,385.00

President Linda Parrish announced the proposed 2025 Budget came to us as a recommendation of the Finance Committee and the Conference Leadership Team. She then asked if there were any questions. As there were none, a vote was taken and the 2025 Budget was approved. The complete Financial Report and 2025 Budget can be found in the appendix.

Paulette Monroe, Chair Committee on Nominations, recognized Ethel Diehl and Mary Reed for completing their service on the CON. She also recognized Edith Zewadski-Bricker for her service on the Charter for Racial Justice Committee.

Paulette then presented the report from the CON and asked the women to stand when their names were called. They are: CON Class 2028: Marie Sharp and Julie Ramga.

Members of the Charter for Racial Justice Committee include by virtue of their office the President, Chair CON, and one language coordinator. Social Action Liaison Ann Eachus, Spanish Language Coordinator Angela Kim are already serving on the committee with tenure.

Additional members to be elected are Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson and Dr. Gwendolyn Dixon.

Linda asked if there were any nominations from the floor for the positions that were presented. Hearing none, she declared the nominations CON class of 2028 closed and a vote was taken. Both Marie Sharpe and Julie Ramga were approved by voice vote.

Linda then asked for a vote on the two additions to the Charter for Racial Justice Committee. Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson and Dr. Gwendolyn Dixon were approved by voice vote.

President Linda announced the position of Secretary of Program Resources is not required in the constitution of the conference United Women in Faith and will be eliminated from our elected officers in the standing rules. She will appoint an individual to oversee the Reading Plan and asked if anyone was interested to contact her. Jackie Brooks, current Secretary of Program Resources was then recognized for her dedicated service.

The business for the meeting was completed and Linda thanked Janet Blume for being the parliamentarian and encouraged women to fill out the talent bank forms or speak to one of the members of the CON for future positions on the team.

*Kay Roach installed and reaffirmed the 2025 Slate of officers.

Celebrating The Local Units' Accomplishments in 2023-2024

Secretary of Program Resources, Jackie Brooks, congratulated all the units and members who participated in a mission study and the reading program.

Mission Today Units:

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Participation
East Central	1	7		1
Gulf Central	2	7		1
North East		1		
North West	1	6	1	
South East	5	4		
South West	1	1		

Mission Studies:

Who Can We Be Together? Building our Community of Hope

East Central	5
Gulf Central	1
South East	1
South West	2

Living in the Kin-dom: Exploring the Lord's Prayer

Gulf Central	9
South East	4
North West	10

Finding Peace in an Anxious World

South East	1
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Reading Plan

	Plan 1	Plan2	Plan 3	Plan4
East Central	10	5	1	4
Gulf Central	6	5	2	6
North East	26	1	6	4
North West	10	2	2	
South East	30	8	2	1
South West	5	1		

Announcements – Looking Toward the Future

Dr. Nora Hernandez Hendrix, Dean, Mission u (2023-24) announced Mission u will be combined with the Spiritual Retreat and held July 18-20. The Virtual Zoom session dates are July 22, 24, 29, 31 at 6:30 p.m. Scholarships and registration information will be available in the new year. The adult study will be "Practicing Hope Together."

Rendy Blanchard, Haitian Language Coordinator announced the Haitian Convocation will be held on March 15, 2025, at El Shadai in Wesley Memorial UMC, Fort Myers. The registration fee is \$20 and tee shirts are \$10.00 and will be available soon.

Mary Van Tol announced plans for Assembly 2026 are underway and will be held in Indianapolis, Indiana on May 15-17.

The Communion Service was led by Rev. Dr. Simon Osunlana.

After the Communion service Linda thanked everyone for their attendance and help during the meeting. A list of recognition given out during the meeting includes the following:

Gift to Mission Cards were given to:

First Lakeland United Women in Faith Unit & Church

Janet Blume

Kay Roach

SMR pins were given to:

Rev. Dr. Simon Osunlana

Bishop Tom Berlin

Ethel Diehl

Mary Reed

Jackie Brooks

Edith Zewadski-Bricker

Honorariums were given to:

Faniel Pradel

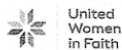
Adjourned at 3:00 PM

Mary Van Tol,

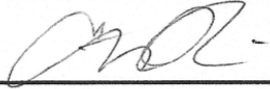
Secretary Florida Conference United Women in Faith

12/5/2024

*Note: Past President Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson was in an accident and unable to install the slate as noted in the program. Past President and SEJ Vice President Kay Roach filled in for her.



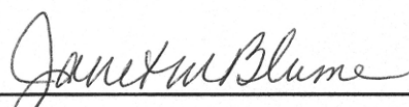
COMMITTEE APPROVAL OF THESE CAM MINUTES



Ester Kim Date 10/14/25

Minutes Approved as Written ☒

Minutes Approved as Corrected ☐



Janet Blume Date 10/14/25

Minutes Approved as Written ☒

Minutes Approved as Corrected ☐