Florida Conference United Women in Faith
52nd Conference Annual Meeting
First United Methodist Church of Plant City
"Inspire, Influence, Impact!"
Saturday, November 8, 2025
10:00 a.m.

Call to order/Welcome/Introductions/Purpose

Linda Parrish, Conference President, welcomed attendees to the 52nd Annual Meeting of the Florida Conference and 4th as United Women in Faith. She thanked Ginny Roebuck (Plant City UWFaith President) and Richard Wisher, (organist) for providing us with music today.

Linda then recognized the following attendees who were asked to stand: pastors (5), Deaconesses (4), Home Missioners (2), Past Presidents (3), Bishop, National Office (2). She then welcomed all the lay members which included everyone besides the Bishop and Pastors.

The district presidents were invited to stand as they were introduced: Janet Blume - East Central, Shari Gillis - Gulf Central, Mary Negron - North East, Dr. Nora Hernandez Hendrix – South East, Beverly Emond – South West, and Dr. Gwen Dixon – North West.

Florida Conference Officers were also recognized including Ester Kim – Vice President, Donna Spear - Treasurer, Mary Van Tol – Secretary, Ann Eachus – Social Action Liaison, Dr. Lorraine Mayfield-Brown – Dean Mission u (2022-2024), Rev. Catherine Fluck-Price (unable to attend today) – Cabinet Liaison, Rendy Blanchard – Haitian Language Coordinator (unable to attend), 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 Chair Paulette Monroe, Ciliane Louis, Veta Daly, Julie Ramga, Marie Sharp, Pam Davis, and Deborah Jenkins-Bailey.
Linda then led the attendees in reciting The United Women in Faith Purpose.

Guest Speakers

Ginny Roebuck, Unit President, First United Methodist Church of Plant City welcomed the attendees by dressing up as Isabella Thoburn and relating the story of being one of the first women to travel to India as a missionary to help women living there. She focused on the struggle women in Boston had to meet and fund the costs involved in sending her and Dr. Clara Swain to India. They became the first inspiring influencers in our organization who have impacted both our country and the world.

Rev. Maragret Roundtree, Senior Pastor, First United Methodist Church of Plant City welcomed us and gave directions for moving around the campus.

Jessica B. Scott, Conference Associate Lay Leader highlighted the life of the first woman evangelist, Mary Magdalene and her travels after the resurrection of Jesus. She concluded her talk with the quote from Mother Teresa: "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

Bishop Tom Berlin greeted us and spoke about his mission to Africa and how he shares our founding women's trail and travel with a well-worn suitcase. He congratulated Linda Parrish for the work she has done both as president and as missionary in UMCOR. He urged everyone to be aware of the government shut down and the great food insecurity that is coming for those who receive food stamps. He asked us all to do as much as we can in our local churches to help fund local food shelves and be there for our communities as they did in the past. He also encouraged us not to just talk, but to do things in our local community. He ended his talk with saying the call from Jesus in Matthew 25 to "show kindness and feed the hungry, thirsty, sick…in prison."

Daily Prayer Guide

Natacha Etienne Joseph highlighted the scriptures Haggai 1:1-15 and Luke 20 1-8 encouraging everyone to read them as the book of Haggai is a powerful reminder of how God calls His people to refocus, rebuild and return to Him. Luke emphasizes the authority of Jesus. Those who we needed to be in prayer for include Jessica Aslam, scholarship recipient, and all those listed in the guide this week who were celebrating birthdays. She closed with a prayer written by Alpha May Tomas, Deaconess from Santa Ana, California.

Scripture Reading Matthew 5: 13-14, 16 (NIV)

You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Read in:

English – Bev Emond, South West District President
Spanish – Angela Kim, Spanish Language Coordinator
Creole – Kerlyne Charles-Jeanne, South East District, Conference Haitian Language Nominee
Korean – Ester Kim, Vice President

Guest Speaker

President Linda introduced our guest speaker Sally Vonner, General Secretary/CEO United Women in Faith, highlighting her education and service in the United Methodist Church and United Women in Faith organization. Sally opened her speech with an African saying, "I am because you are." She then thanked everyone for all the cards of sympathy this past year for the passing of her family members which included her son, sister and father. The cards received, the support and encouragement everyone showed her were well appreciated. Highlighting her connection to the Florida Conference United Women in Faith, she spoke about her first time speaking at a leadership training and attending our 2022 Annual Meeting. At that time, she was the transformation executive helping the organization as they decided to find new ways to connect with women which resulted in both our focus and name change. She credited Rev. Walter Monroe and others with helping her move from a place of uncertainty or discomfort to that of inspiration and influence and the belief that she could make an impact.

Sally highlighted how National adopted the theme for our program "Inspire, Influence, Impact" and used it to rebrand and refocus. Spiritual growth was key as they found out through

thousands of women throughout our organization and church. Sally shared a 3-Point plan for the future which highlights growth:

1. Grow membership to 500,000 through the "Unstoppable" membership campaign which will be revealed at Assembly 2026.
2. Grow Revenue as we are still recovering from the pandemic and church disaffiliations.
3. Achieve the $60,000,000 Legacy Goal set on our 150th Anniversary celebration.

Memorial Service

Veta Daly led the ceremony for all those who passed since our last annual meeting in November 2024. As the hymn "Marching to Zion" played, each district name was called and the District Presidents brought up a candle to commemorate the women while attendees were asked to read the names listed in the Program. The total number from each District were as follows:
East Central - 11, Gulf Central - 21, North East -8, North West -13, South East - 8, South West -8.

"Through Action"

Ann Eachus, Social Action Liaison highlighted the Racial Justice Event that was held on October 21, 2025, which featured Nicole Leon, Executive Director, Florida Immigration Law & Justice Center. It focused on "Knowing Your Rights" about immigration and what to do if ICE comes to your church, home or nearby in your neighborhood. She also reminded everyone to continue to support Cornerstone Family Ministries, noting Cathy Stone, Executive Director recently spoke at the South West District Annual Meeting and asked everyone to undertake extra fundraising for them which will provide scholarships for low-income families to have their children attend their program. Ann also spoke about the Nex Tex Recycling Challenge. For every 1000 pounds of plastic bags and other film collected within a year, they will give you a garden bench made of recycled plastic. She said Sarasota First UMC has already collected 200 pounds.

"Through Legacy"

Deaconess Christi Campos, UWFaith Executive for Development and Donor Relations, Pam Davis, Legacy Liaison, and Mae Griner, Program Advisory Group (PAG) all spoke about their roles in the Legacy Endowment Fund highlighting how this fund is our future to be able to continue our Purpose of helping women, children and youth.

The total raised so far is $52,455, 923.00. Florida's giving for 2025 is $8,656.31 adding to a total cumulative of $342,276.21. Additionally, we raised $564 from the Silent Auction.

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 2024 there were 42 5-Star Units and 88 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 "The True Story of Courageous Women" about mission giving was played and an offering for Mission Giving was taken. The total collected was $1,434.

Lunch break was from Noon until 1:30 PM

Donna dismissed us from our morning session with the lunch blessing.

Business Meeting

President Linda Parrish called to order the business session of our meeting at 1:45 pm.

Mary Van Tol, Conference Secretary took the Roll Call*(Refer to Note 1):
East Central – 15, Gulf Central- 34, North East – 8, North West – 10, South East – 27, South West –6.

President Linda announced that the minutes from the 51st 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 by a show of hands. As there were no corrections, they were accepted as written.

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. Janet was unanimously 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. These nominees must have been submitted to the Committee on Nominations by October 25, 2025.

Linda appointed Veta Daley and Shari Gillis to review and present the minutes of the 52nd 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 2025 Remitted:

Conference Pledge:	$ 178,454.73
Call to Prayer and Self Denial:	$ 6,475.15
UWinFaith Projects:	$ 689.52
SEJ Pledge:	$ 1,750.00
AM&D 2025 Disbursed:	$ 93,539.69

The proposed budget for 2026 included the amounts below:

Conference Pledge:	$ 155,000.00
SEJ Pledge:	$ 1,550.00
AM&D:	$ 116,605.00
Total 2026 Budget:	$ 273,155.00

President Linda announced the proposed 2026 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 2026 Budget was approved. The complete list for both the Financial Report and 2026 Budget can be found in the appendix.

Paulette Monroe, Chair Committee on Nominations, recognized Ciliane Louis, Veta Daley and Pam Davis for completing their service on the CON. She also recognized Linda Parrish, Angela Kim, Rendy Blanchard, Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson and Ann Eachus for their service on the Charter for Racial Justice Committee.

The following members of the Conference Leadership Team were commended for their service and commitment to the organization. Completing their terms are Linda Parrish, Ester Kim, Mary Van Tol, Donna Spear, Angela Kim, Rendy Blanchard and Ann Eachus.

Paulette then presented the report from the CON and asked the women to stand when their names were called. Nominees for Leadership Team (2026-2028)
President: Dr. Nora Hernandez Hendrix
Vice President: Veta Daley
Treasurer: Natacha Etienne Joseph
Secretary: Janie McMillan
Chairperson, Committee on Nominations: Deborah Jenkins-Bailey
Communications Coordinator: Mary Van Tol

Appointed Positions:
Social Action: Edith Zewadski-Bricker
Haitian Language Coordinator: Kerlyne Charles-Jeune

Linda asked for those who approved the slate as presented to stand. There were no disapprovals or abstentions. All were unanimously approved. **(Refer to note2)

Class of 2029 Committee on Nominations: Dreena Robinson and Shari Gillis
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 2029 closed and a vote was taken. Both were unanimously approved.

By-laws state “There will be seven members of the Charter for Racial Justice Committee including by virtue of their office the President (who will serve as chair), Chair CON, and one language coordinator, one district president, one member of the leadership team and two additional members. The additional names were not brought forward at this time.

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.

Installation Sally Vonner installed 2026-2028 Slate of officers as she handed out a “tool kit” of items which signified different tips to use as they serve their upcoming terms of office.

Passing/Receiving the Gavel

Words from both outgoing president Linda Parrish and incoming president Nora Hernandez Hendrix were shared as the gavel changed hands. Mary Van Tol presented Linda with a gift of a Vera Bradley duffle bag, UWFaith Cup, key ring and a GTM thank you card from the leadership team for her hard work and leadership these past two years.

Celebrating The Local Units' Accomplishments in 2024-2025

Mary Van Tol highlighted several fund raising and activities of all six districts in our conference which included fund raising events for local communities, spiritual growth retreats, celebrations, social justice events and leadership training.

She also congratulated all the units and members who were awarded certificates for their participation in Mission Today, Mission Study, Charter for Racial Justice, and the Reading Plan.

Reading Plan

	Plan 1	Plan2	Plan 3	Plan4
East Central	19	4	3	5
Gulf Central	8	10	2	8
North East	19	10	3	4
North West	15	6	1	1
South East	25	7	3	2
South West	3	1		

Charter For Racial Justice Policies

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
East Central	2	1	
Gulf Central	2	3	
North West	2		
South East	1	2	1
South West		1	

Mission Today Units:

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Participation
East Central	2	3	2	2
Gulf Central	3	8		
North East				
North West	1	4		
South East	4	4		
South West	1			

Mission Studies:

Who Can We Be Together? Building our Community of Hope
South West 1
Living the Kin-dom: Exploring the Lord's Prayer
Gulf Central 3
South East 2
South West 1
The Kin-dom is Among You: Welcome Home
Gulf Central 2
South East 1
The Kin-dom is Among You: Drawing Closer to God and One Another
North West 3

Opportunities to live out the call to action in 2026

Deaconess Ruth Pierre Jean Pierre spoke about how her role as Haitian language coordinator resulted in creating the first Haitian Convocation at Fort Pierce Haitian United Methodist Church in February 2011. Ross Graves, Florida Conference Methodist Lay Leader. Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson educated the attendees on how United Women in Faith use mission-giving funds, explaining where the money goes and how it supports ministry. Since then, gatherings have rotated every two years among districts with Haitian congregations as possible. The next Convocation will be March 14, 2026, in Orlando which is in the East Central District.

Dr. Lorraine Mayfield-Brown, Dean, Mission u used the Parable about Seeds and Good Soil from Mark 4:16-20 to explain how some people deal with the gospel. She then announced the theme for Mission u 2026 is Experiencing Emmanuel. This theme explores times in the Bible when people experienced "God with us", especially times that involve God "calling" us to a particular action or way of being.

The studies offered include:
Adults – A Deep Knowing: Experiencing Emmanuel Through Every Part of our Lives
Youth – God with Us: Experiencing God's Presence in our Lives.
Children – Experiencing Emmanuel by Amy Beth Jones
Date, time and venue are: In Person, Friday evening July 17 to Sunday morning July 19 at Westin Orlando North Hotel in Orlando. Virtual July 21, 23, 28, 29.

Angela Kim announced that registration was open for Assembly 2026. She noted that the theme for this event is "Dream It! Believe It! Do it! It will be held on Friday, May 15-Sunday May 17, 2026, at the Indianapolis Illinois Convention. Keynote speakers include Stacey Abrams and her mother Rev. Carolyn Abrams. Early registration closes on November 30 and attendees will attend one Town Hall and one Workshop each day.

Jane Darling, Southeastern Jurisdiction Secretary told us the jurisdiction is made up of 14 conferences from Virginia to Mississippi to Florida. They are currently planning for the next Quadrennial Event in 2028. The venue will be announced at Assembly 2026 in Indianapolis.

The Communion Service was led by Rev. Maragret Roundtree.

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

Gift to Mission Cards

FUMC Plant City
Jessica Scott
Bishop Tom Berlin
Sally Vonner
Deaconess Christi Campos
Deaconess Ruth Pierre Jean Pierre

SMR pins

Rev. Margaret Rountree
Richard Wisher
Ginny Roebuck
Ciliane Louis
Angela Kim
Ann Eachus
Rendy Blanchard
Ester Kim
Donna Spear
Mary Van Tol
Linda Parrish

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM

Mary Van Tol,
Secretary Florida Conference United Women in Faith
12/2/2025

Note 1*Total registration was 114 which included both members and guests.

Note 2** The change in officers beginning on January 1, 2026, will necessitate changes in our two bank accounts. For Truist accoun[redacted] Natacha Etienne Joseph and Dr. Nora Hernandez Hendrix should be added as signers. Donna Spear and Linda Parrish should be removed as signers. For Truist accoun[redacted] (Mission u), Natacha Etienne Joseph should be added as a signer. Lyn Sears should remain a signer and Donna Spear should be removed.

United
Women
in Faith
Florida Conference
of The United Methodist Church

COMMITTEE APPROVAL OF THESE MINUTES

Shari Gillis Shari Gillis Date 12/12/25

Minutes Approved as Written [X] Minutes Approved as Corrected [X]

Veta Daley 12/15/25

Veta Daley Date

Minutes Approved as Written [ ] Minutes Approved as Corrected [X]

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