



Florida Conference United Methodist Women



Genesis

August 2021; vol. 48 no. 2

Website: www.flconfumw.org

Purpose

United Methodist Women is a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.



“Be still and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.” Psalm 46:10s

We have been through a very challenging time these past 18 months with COVID-19, other personal, regional, national, and global tragedies. We must continue to first, be still and let God take the lead.

the lead, then do our part to bring changes about. We should trust in the science, get vaccinated, and encourage others to do the same if no medical conditions preclude us from doing so. This is our way to proclaim “Ubuntu!” “I am, because you are!” We need you to be healthy and safe as we continue the preparations to host the 2022 United Methodist Women Assembly in Orlando.

What do you need to know, as you make your plans not only to Attend but also to give a warm Sunny Florida Welcome to our Global guests?

- First, join the Planning team in prayers through the next 10 months leading to Assembly so all participants may TURN IT UP for justice for women, children, and youth.
- Next complete the volunteer registration form. The form can be found on our Conference website www.flconumw.org. You may also send the attached copy electronically to Judi Levan at judilevan.umw@gmail.com
- Then, register for the event early to save \$35 (See attached chart). Registration will open September 1st.
- Finally, secure your hotel reservation. Assembly participants will receive special rates at the Hilton – \$178 single/double \$198 triple/quad – Hyatt Regency Orlando \$198 – Rozen Center \$174 – Rozen Plaza \$158 (rates do not include applicable state and local taxes)

Note: The Conference has reserved block of rooms at the Hilton Orlando from May 19 through 21. To take advantage of the Conference block rooms, contact Mary Van Tol at maryvantol.umw@gmail.com. Block rooms are allowed for the main event dates only, I do understand some of our volunteers

President: Judith Pierre-Okerson
judithpierreokerson.umw@gmail.com

Vice President:
Shelley Davidson
Shelleydavidson.umw@gmail.com

Secretary: Jackie Brooks
jbrooks.umw@gmail.com

Treasurer: Donna Spear
donnaspear.umw@gmail.com

Program Resources:
Jannett Hawley
Jannetthawley.umw@gmail.com

CHair, Committee on Nominations: Kenya Monroe
Kenyamonroe.umw@gmail.com

Dean, Mission u: Pam Davis
psdavis@hotmail.com

and those attending Ubuntu may need housing prior to Thursday. United Methodist Women Assembly (UMWA) has rooms available for **pre/post event dates**. Reservations may be made with UMWA directly and will be processed on a first come basis. Those who would like to process their reservations outside of the Conference block may contact Orchid Events Customer Care directly at 888 341-3540 starting September 1st; reservations outside of the Conference block will be processed on a first come basis.

As you decide on how many nights you need to reserve you should know:

- ❖ The pre-Assembly event will begin Thursday, May 19, 2022, with the optional Ubuntu Day of Service at 9:00 am. Note there is a \$75 fee to participate in the Ubuntu Day of Service.
- ❖ Assembly will begin with Community Gathering every morning at 9:00 starting Friday, May 20
- ❖ Assembly will conclude at noon Sunday, May 22, 2022.

Virtual Option: No member will be left behind! For the first time, Assembly 2022 will offer a virtual attendance option for those who are unable to attend in-person. The cost for the virtual event is \$199 for the early registration and \$235 after November 30th.

Check the Assembly and our conference websites for updates and do not hesitate to contact me with any question on Assembly. If I do not have the answer, I will find it for you.

Judith P. Okerson

Deaconess Judith Pierre Okerson, PhD
 President United Methodist Women, Florida Conference
 The United Methodist Church

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RATES

Registration opens Sept. 1, 2021 and closes April 11, 2022.

Early Online Registration	9/1/21-1/30/21 (Midnight PST)	\$330
Online Registration	12/1/21-4/11/22 (Midnight PST)	\$365
Paper mail-in form*	9/1/21-4/11/22	\$365
Virtual Option Early Registration	9/1/21-1/30/21 (Midnight PST)	\$199
Virtual Option Registration	12/1/21-4/11/22(Midnight PST)	\$235
Ubuntu Day of Service (optional)	Filled until capacity	\$75

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN – ASSEMBLY 2022
VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM
Please fill out carefully and completely – Please print legibly

Note: This volunteer form is NOT registration for Assembly. You MUST register for Assembly separately.

Circle (Mr. Mrs. Ms. Dr. Rev.) First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

UMW Conference: _____ UMW District: _____

Local Unit/Church: _____

HOSTESS	INFORMATION / LOST & FOUND	REGISTRATION DESK	GREETERS	USHERS
		___ Wednesday - Shift 3	___ Wednesday - Shift 3	___ Friday Morning
___ Thursday - Shift 1	___ Thursday - Shift 1	___ Thursday - Shift 1	___ Thursday - Shift 1	___ Friday Evening
___ Thursday - Shift 2	___ Thursday - Shift 2	___ Thursday - Shift 2	___ Thursday - Shift 2	___ Saturday Morning
___ Thursday - Shift 3	___ Thursday - Shift 3	___ Thursday - Shift 3	___ Thursday - Shift 3	___ Saturday Evening
___ Friday - Shift 1	___ Friday - Shift 1	___ Friday - Shift 1	___ Friday - Shift 1	___ Sunday Morning
___ Friday - Shift 2	___ Friday - Shift 2	___ Friday - Shift 2	___ Friday - Shift 2	
___ Friday - Shift 3	___ Friday - Shift 3	___ Friday - Shift 3	___ Friday - Shift 3	
___ Saturday - Shift 1	___ Saturday - Shift 1	___ Saturday - Shift 1		
___ Saturday - Shift 2	___ Saturday - Shift 2	___ Saturday - Shift 2		
___ Saturday - Shift 3	___ Saturday - Shift 3	___ Saturday - Shift 3		COMMUNION / OFFERING
___ Sunday - Shift 1	___ Sunday - Shift 1	___ Sunday - Shift 1		___ Friday Evening
___ Sunday - Shift 2	___ Sunday - Shift 2	___ Sunday - Shift 2		___ Sunday Morning

EMERGENCY INFORMATION (must be complete if you will be attending in person):

Emergency Contact: _____ Relationship: _____

Phone Number: _____ Mobility Needs: _____

MAIL, TEXT, or EMAIL completed form to:

Judi Levan, 19852 Lonesome Pine Dr., Land O Lakes, FL 34638. (813-428-0404, judilevan.umw@gmail.com)

UMW sisters,

Last year, there were many broken hearts as we slowly watched COVID take control of our lives. We were stuck in our homes. Children were not able to go to school and many of us were unable to work and provide for our families. Loved ones were taken from us, people were protesting in the streets in the name of the BLM movement, riots and businesses were invaded and many injustices took place. It was a difficult year for us all. Assembly is the perfect opportunity to fellowship with other women, to celebrate God's protection and grace towards us in the midst of the difficult times we faced. The bible says to worship in times of difficulty and in times of joy. Assembly is the perfect excuse to celebrate the blessings God has given us. It's the perfect time to celebrate 150 years and counting of faith, hope, love, and action. Let's turn it up!

At Assembly 2022 we will:

**TURN IT UP! For spiritual growth and renewal
TURN IT UP! For rebirth in new time
TURN IT UP! For women leaders
TURN IT UP! For justice for women, children, and youth**

2022 is coming soon and guess what! It's in your own backyard! The time is now Florida conference!

If you have had the disadvantage of not being able to attend assembly in previous years, now is your chance! Don't procrastinate! Assembly 2022 will be in Orlando, Florida at the Orlando Convention Center. Come on out to feed your soul and spirit with moving worship/ You will be in the midst of fellow sisters from different walks of life.

Florida Conference United Methodist Women, let's get together and TURN IT UP! We'll see you there on May 20-22, 2022!

The \$330 registration fee runs from September 1st, 2021 through November 30th, 2021.

Want to learn more about Assembly 2022? Visit [Assembly2022.org](https://www.assembly2022.org).

The time has come to TURN IT UP!

**Florida conference
National office director,
Magdala Fleurimond**





I bring you greetings, and I pray each of you has been doing well since our last edition of the *Genesis*. In this edition, you will find information for our upcoming Spiritual Enrichment Retreat and our Conference Annual Meeting.

I am hoping by now you have received information from your district and conference counterparts that the Spiritual Enrichment Retreat that was planned to take place “in-person” will now be held VIRTUALLY. Information is being emailed to you about this and can also be found on the conference website <http://www.flconfumw.org>.

We were so very much planning for in-person, but the Covid-19 and Delta variant numbers are rising and rising at warp-speed; therefore, for the health and safety of each of you, the decision had to be made to hold the retreat virtually.

Because of this change, I ask that you communicate with your counterparts regarding this event, as they will be receiving information off and on throughout the coming weeks.

Some details for the event:

WHEN: Friday, September 10th, through Sunday, September 12th
WHERE: Virtual
GUEST SPEAKER: Rev. Dr. Latricia Scriven
THEME: “Created with Love”
SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 2:10

You will find in this *Genesis* the event flyer to share with your ladies and members of your church. You can register via Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/created-with-love-spiritual-enrichment-retreat-tickets-162737262533>. I'd like to give a big “thank-you” to Donna Spear, who took the time out of her hectic schedule to create the Eventbrite registration link!

We will carry that same theme – “Created with Love” – through with the Conference Annual Meeting being held on November 6th. We are optimistically planning to have this event First United Methodist Church in Lakeland. It will be held on Saturday, November 6th and will be a condensed event beginning at 9:30 am and wrapping up at 12:30. Our guest speaker will be Ainise ‘Isama’U, UMW National President. Details are being finalized, so please check with your District Presidents for updates.

Remember, ALL Florida Conference information and events and various District events can be found by going to the Conference website at: <http://www.flconfumw.org>.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Blessings,

Shelley Davidson
Vice-President
Shelleydavidson.umw@gmail.com



Florida Conference United Methodist Women



Guest Speaker:
Rev. Dr. Latricia Scriven

September 10-12, 2021

**CHANGE IN VENUE:
OUR RETREAT WILL BE
HELD VIRTUALLY**

Please click on the Eventbrite link below to register

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/created-with-love-spiritual-enrichment-retreat-tickets-162737262533>



Spiritual Enrichment Retreat Registration Form
“Created with Love” with Rev. Latricia Scriven
Sept. 10-12, 2021
Virtual, via Zoom

Name: _____ Phone (____) _____
Cell Phone (____) _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

E-Mail: _____ Church or UMW unit: _____

District (Circle one): AC EC GC NC NE NW SE SW

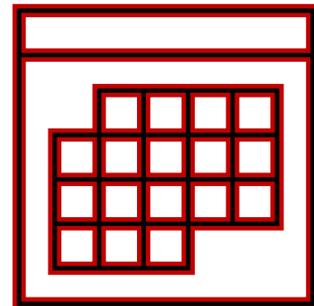
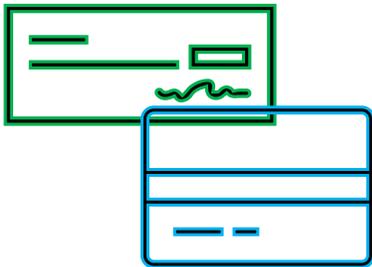
Cost is \$20. Make checks payable to: **Florida Conference United Methodist Women.**
To register with credit card or PayPal, go to flconfumw.org

A limited number of Scholarships are available. Check with your district president. Scholarship deadline is Aug. 13. **Scholarship recipients must register!!**

Registration deadline: August 30

Send to Registrar: Donna Spear, 5107 N Seminole Ave, Tampa, FL 33603.
Phone: 813-293-4281 Email: donnaspear.umw@gmail.com

For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:10



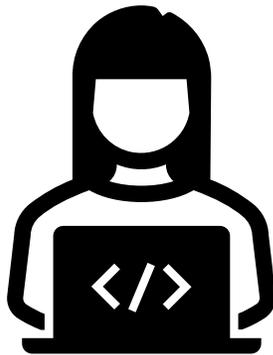
Do your registration by August 30!!!

You wanted to be the Secretary. You thought, “I think I can do this,” and you did help with taking “notes” at the Circle meeting. What could be different or maybe you thought, “HOW HARD COULD IT BE?!”

If you are returning or new to the Secretary position of a District Mission team, a local unit, or even a UMW Circle. Here are some tips so that your term as Secretary can be successful. As the District/ Local/ Unit Secretary, you will need to know the following: **Setting up Minutes Book, Files, Records**

- You have a variety of Record-Keeping responsibilities as part of your office. The Conference and your district depend on you for maintaining its history.
- Decide where you want to set up your office and the supplies necessary for you to carry out these responsibilities,
- Decide on a system you will use to handle correspondence, files, and records and stick with it. Do not change unless it is not working for you.

Jackie Brooks/Secretary



\$\$ Treasurer Talk \$\$

By Donna Spear, Treasurer, Florida Conference United Methodist Women



Mission Giving Update

Thank you to all as you continue to faithfully support United Methodist Women through Mission Giving! For Quarter 1 in 2021, Florida Conference UMW paid \$55,458.42 (approximately 17.3%) toward our Mission Giving pledge of \$325,000. Quarter 2 funds are still being tabulated at this time.

Nationally, Mission Giving is down. Giving from January to May 2021 is 23.7% lower than the same period in 2020. We all need to do our parts to keep United Methodist Women financially strong.

Do you want to know where our money goes? Please see the “Where the Money Goes” flyer included with this edition of *Genesis* as an attached. It came out recently from our National Office, and is definitely worth sharing!

World Thank Offering

So much to be thankful for! Remind your ladies to continue to contribute to their World Thank Offering jars, which will be collected in November. Have some crafty ladies? Ask them to make World Thank jars for everyone in your unit. I still have mine, made many years ago from a mason jar. Dropping a few coins, or even a bill, in the jar is a tangible way to express my gratitude for life’s blessings. I cherish my jar even more as the creator passed away some years ago. Her legacy lives on!

Online Mission Giving is Here!

Online giving is very convenient. Go to the Florida Conference United Methodist Women’s website (<https://flconfumw.org/mission-giving>) to give with a debit or credit card, or using your own PayPal account. In the “write a note” section, include the name of your unit and district, so both can receive credit toward Mission Giving Pledges. You can opt to give a single time, or set up recurring gifts (for those of us who like to “set it and forget it”). And, of course, traditional ways of giving will continue as always.

2021 Where the Money Goes

United Methodist Women (UMW) is trusted with pledges and donations from individual members as well as mission partners and anonymous donors who have a heart for mission. The national office is committed to good stewardship of our members' generous support.



The Five Channels of Giving (pictured at the left) show the various ways that our members give undesignated funds to our organization. When a local unit of UMW gives, a portion of the Pledge to Mission is kept by their respective conference for its own district and conference administrative and membership development (A&MD) expenses. The remainder of the Pledge and the other channels of Mission Giving are forwarded to the national office. The elected board of directors votes on the budget each year.

Below are some major categories of how giving is at work around the world!

National Mission Institutions

National Mission Institutions (NMIs)

We support nearly 90 NMIs across the United States serving the needs of marginalized and vulnerable communities in these areas:

- care for children
- educate and develop youth
- create economic opportunities
- transform neighborhoods
- housing

unitedmethodistwomen.org/nmi

Regional Missionaries

Regional Missionaries

Focusing on issues of health, gender equality and elimination of violence among women, and support for the uprooted and marginalized.

- training programs
- workshops
- strategic planning
- networking

unitedmethodistwomen.org/missionaries

Grants

Grants & Scholarships

- international & national mission grants
- cultivation grants for UMW missionary conferences
- social justice issue grants
- Theresa Hoover service & global citizenship award
- international and national scholarships

In 2020 we awarded grants for COVID relief and prevention; \$189 thousand internationally and \$73 thousand nationally!

Where the Money Goes *(continued)*



Service & Advocacy

Service & Advocacy

Work on peace and justice, education, the rights of children, human rights and farm workers' rights.

Our work in partnership with coalitions on many justice issues to extend its reach.

Leadership and social action training. Mission education. Deaconess and home missioner programs and more!



What We Don't Fund

What We Don't Fund

United Methodist Women does not fund projects and programs that:

- don't benefit women, children or youth
- don't comply with our UMC Social Principles
- are administered by discriminatory organizations

We are committed to transparency in our funding sources, especially with our membership.

[More About United Methodist Women Finances](#)

Each year we release an annual report that describes much of the work we were able to do together. You can read notes from our key leaders, see pictures and stories about projects, view the financial reports and imagine the possibilities for the coming years!

We do a lot with our members on service, training, social action and more; but another part of our work is awarding grants and scholarships to deserving organizations and individuals. The recipients and purposes of the grants and scholarships are released each year in our grants disclosure.

Visit unitedmethodistwomen.org/finance to view multiple years of our annual reports and grants disclosures.

**United Methodist Women:
Turning Financial Gifts into Miracles for
Women, Children and Youth**

“One thing that I know is that our financial strength is indicative of the love we have for those whom we serve.”

—Tamara Clark

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN READING PROGRAM

Secretary Program Resources

Jannett S. Hawley



My Dear Sisters,

We had our first “in person” Mission u in two years. Virtual Mission u has also taken place. I heard nothing but positive responses about the classes. It was exciting to see so many smiling faces. The Mission u Resource Table had some free things and I had ten (10) Bearing Witness books available and I now have one left! Looking forward to the Spiritual Enrichment Retreat in September!!

Now on to the business at hand. All Reading Plan Report forms for the wonderful books we read from Aug. 2020 to Sept.1, 2021 are to be sent to your District Secretary Program Resources sometime in September. PLEASE check for correct date. Forms are available at: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org, Members & Leaders, 2021-2022 Reading Program, lower right Reading Program Reporting Form. You can print as many forms as you need. In turn, District Secretary Program Resources are to send me (1) name of the church and (2) number of readers by September 25, 2021. DON'T FORGET.

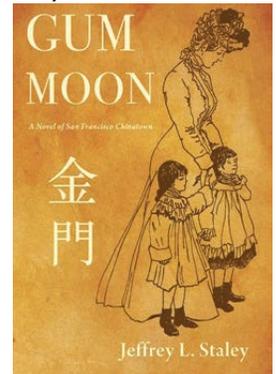
I have sent (June 3, 2021) the updated Reading Program Catalogue that had Andris Salters letter included, to the District SPR's. Just remember if you listen to three Faith Talks podcasts they will count as two books. These bonus books count as two also: Rise, Pushout, Woman United for Change, and Finding Peace in an Anxious World. Also, National has added three movies and documentaries that will be counted as one book each. They are: Just Mercy, The Hate You Give, and Pushout. One other piece of info sent from National is that the Annual Sampler for 2022 has been paused. The remaining ('21-'22) Program Book-Resource will be shipped late August (it is still in production).

GUM MOON:

A NOVEL OF SAN FRANCISCO CHINATOWN

JEFFREY L. STALEY --- SELF-PUBLISHED (2018)

In 1898, three-year-old Chinese-American girl Mei Chun Lai is sold to a cruel brothel keeper, where a sympathetic prostitute befriends her. Two years later, at the height of a plague quarantine, a young Methodist woman places her in a home for abused and trafficked girls. The home is destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire. Chun (aka “Maud”) and a group of seven other Chinese children embark on a cross-country singing tour to raise funds to rebuild. When their home matron suffers a break-down, 13-year-old Maud must lead the band of children home. Based on a true story.



FAITH TALKS: A PODCAST JUST FOR YOU.....

Faith Talks are monthly conversations with United Methodist Women.

Each conversation explores themes and resources that empower us

to put faith, hope and love into action. Check out interviews with

United Methodist Women mission studies' authors and more: @ unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks

Please remember to read Response magazine. This too is included as part of the Reading Program.





Mission u 2021 Celebrates 75th year of Mission Education in the Florida Conference!

WOW!!!! We did it! After a year of not meeting with one another, we had marvelous Mission u virtual gatherings in June and July along with an in-person event in July at Warren Willis Camp & Conference Center! We had almost 200 participants in the 2021 studies with many first-time attendees.

At both of our virtual events along with our onsite event, we focused on the 2021 UMW Program theme: “*Knitted Together for God’s Good Works!*” Expert and novice knitters and crocheters across the Florida Conference shared their talent and supported each other in our craft to make the final product. We made baby caps and child hats for Cornerstone Family Ministries. We ask that you continue to craft these! Please bring or send them by August 15 to: **Cornerstone Family Ministries, 2801 N. 17th St., Tampa, FL 33605**

We encourage you to lead a mission study in your district, local unit, or church/community! Check with your District President or their website/newsletter for more information. Please be sure that following a Mission Study to complete the form to get credit for the mission study. Go to flconfumw.org for deadlines and forms to be sent to your district officers.

We have been blessed with NEW experiences due to the pandemic! These experiences have allowed us to explore new ways to communicate with one another. Because of our new experiences with digital communication, we have heard from and communicated with missionaries in the field during the event. We have been able to Zoom, to include people in our gatherings from around the state!

This is the one of the first comments that I received from a virtual participant:

“We were inspired by beautiful music and worship, privileged in seeing our missionaries and hearing their stories, seeing and hearing how our UMW women, our leaders and our missionaries are reaching out with the warmth and grace of the Gospel, the love of our Lord, and with the physical warmth of clothing, food and shelter, hearing how His love and Light is being brought into prisons and all the places in the world, even the vast outreaches of Afghanistan, where the People of God are being called in this time.

It was truly an amazing visual and auditory world of discussions, videos of our Missionaries' ministries, breakout rooms of exciting learning and discussing the topics of our mission studies, participating in creative exercises and sharing ideas with other women, hearing reports of successful new avenues of mission, and experiencing sacred worship together as UMW women, sharing the love of God and His grace even through the medium of technology.

I cannot begin to tell you the powerful effect of your prayers because, I truly believe our event was transformed by them. For from the beginning this Mission U was a tour de force of the Lord's amazing display of His exquisite grace, beginning with the sterling lineup of distinguished United Methodist clergy and lay leaders offering their congratulations and praise for 75 years of outstanding outreach and mission, a celebration and a sacred communion service offering up prayers for those bearing the effects of the tragic condo collapse in Miami, and finally sharing our Lord Yeshua's grace, peace and His love through the partaking of the communion elements with our sisters across the Conference.

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We give thanks to those officers who have completed their time on the Mission u team:

Mary Reed, Kathy Megerle, and Judi Levan!

We welcome:

Ethel Logan, Secretary; Linda Parrish, Registrar; Gwen Dixon and Jeanine Christian, serving on the Committee on Nominations.

May our Lord Jesus fill you with joy and peace, giving praise and thanksgiving for the amazing Mission U events!

Faith, Hope, Joy, and Love in Action at Mission u!

Pam Davis,

Dean, Florida Conference Mission u 2021-22

Latest News!!! Offerings: Wesley House \$1054.80; Mission Giving: \$1512.45



Climate Change Effects on Children

Edith Zewadski-Bricker, Social Action Liaison to the Conference Leadership Team

Karen McElfish, MD, a UMWomen Program Advisory Group member and a retired pediatrician presented the following at the recent *Just Energy 4 All* webinar (Do Zoom-in the third Wednesday of every month at 3 pm; go to <https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/just-energy-for-all-webinars> to register). Like Karen, let's, you and I, speak out on behalf of the poor, the people of color, and the marginalized who populate the fence-line communities bordering factories and power plants, who live in the inner cities, and who live in polluted environments around the world, to help others understand why climate change is a justice issue.

As temperatures rise due to climate change, what effects does this have on children? Because of their developing bodies and metabolism, their unique behaviors and their dependence on caregivers, children are more vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. It is estimated that almost 90% of the existing global burden of disease attributed to climate change occurs in children under the age of five.

With the burning of fossil fuels, levels of soot and ozone cause air pollution, which contributes to asthma. Children are particularly vulnerable to ozone, because they have developing lungs, breathe faster and spend more time outdoors. Asthma is the most common pediatric chronic disease, affecting almost 10% of American children. As well, with rising temperatures allergy seasons are prolonged, leading to more allergy-related asthma.

As temperatures rise, so do the number of excessive heat days, with increased incidences of death and disability due to heat stroke. Especially vulnerable are children under the age of one and student athletes, such as high school football players. Additionally, the more than 120,000 child farm workers in the US are adversely affected.

Diarrheal illnesses are a leading cause of childhood deaths worldwide. Bacterial infections such as E coli, salmonella and cholera increase with rising temperatures. Changes in precipitation, both drought and heavy rain, disrupt and contaminate water systems, leading to more cases of gastroenteritis.

Vector borne diseases, those carried by mosquitoes and ticks, increase with the expanding range for both vectors and the disease transmitting organisms, due to warmer climates. Cases of Lyme disease, West Nile virus, Dengue fever, and Malaria rise. Again, children are more at risk, due in part to more time spent outdoors.

The increasing number of extreme weather events displace children and their families, often separating children from their caregivers. Education is disrupted, leading to poorer academic performance, absenteeism, and behavioral and mental health issues.

Food security becomes an issue with extreme heat, increased water demands, drought, sea-level rise, and flooding. Food production is decreased and the nutritional value of foods change, for example with lower zinc and iron in grains. These nutrients are important for growth and development. Childhood undernutrition increases, currently at more than 3 million deaths in children under the age of five and projected to increase by as much as 20% by 2030.

Children are at risk. Now is the time to combat climate change, to protect them and their future.



FLORIDA CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

2022-2023 SLATE

PRESIDENT – Judith Pierre-Okerson (SE)



Deaconess Dr. Judith Pierre-Okerson is a member of Miramar United Methodist Church in the South East District where she is currently serving as the District Lay Leader. A longtime member of United Methodist Women, Judith is the co-secretary of her local UMW and has held all the offices in the local unit. She held offices in the District organization for eleven years including four years as President. At the Conference level Dr. Pierre-Okerson has served as President, Vice-President, School of Christian Mission Dean, Assistant Dean, registrar, and study leaders at the National level. Judith served as the chair of the Committee on Nominations of the Women's Division Board of Directors and the chair of the Governance Committee of the United Methodist Women National Organization.

Deaconess Pierre-Okerson has served on several district and Conference committees including 12 years as a lay representative on the Conference Board of Ordained Ministries. She currently co-chairs the Bishop Antiracism Task Force Training and Accountability Team.

Dr. Pierre-Okerson's involvement in the General Church includes board member of The General Commission on Religion and Race, The General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), The Women's Division, and the United Methodist Women National Organization. Judith was a delegate to several General and Jurisdictional Conferences including the upcoming ones.

VICE-PRESIDENT – Shelley Davidson (SW)



Shelley Davidson is originally from Ohio and relocated to Florida with her family in 1983. Shelley attends First United Methodist Church in Clewiston. She has served in various capacities of the church such as Staff Parrish, Administrative Council, Nominations, Choir, Worship and Alter Committees. Although her mother was involved in United Methodist Women in Ohio, it wasn't until the move south that Shelley became involved with the organization herself. Shelley has held all but one position in her local unit. She served the Southwest District in the capacities of Communications Coordinator, Vice President and President. Following her district presidency, Shelley became involved at the Conference level serving as Secretary of Program Resources and for the past two years has served as the Florida Conference Vice President. Shelley is the webmaster for the Florida Conference UMW and the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ). She has been on the Committee of Nominations for Mission u, as well as holding the Chair position.

Shelley has worked in the sugar industry for 30+ years. For 20 of those years, she has worked at Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida, and currently is their Human Resources Media & Communications Coordinator.

Shelley and her husband have been married for 36 years and they have three grandsons, Landon, Bentley & Austin.

SECRETARY – Mary Van Tol (SW)



Mary Van Tol has been a member of Cape Coral First United Methodist Church since 2009. Born in New York City, she grew up in Northern New Jersey. She moved to Vermont and lived there for 30 years. She retired in 2007 and moved permanently to Florida in 2010. Having an associate degree in Applied Science in Engineering and a BS in Management and Technology, she worked as an engineering technician and technical writer for Goodrich Aerospace for 23 years. Using these skills, she set up the Southwest District website in 2016. Mary has served multiple positions in her local UMW Unit, including president and vice-president, treasurer, circle leader and is currently serving as secretary. In her local church she has served on the finance committee, led Sunday School classes for adults, is a member of a Life Group and helped with childcare both in Celebrate Recovery and Sunday Worship services Mary has been a member of the Southwest District Mission Team as a member of Committee on Nominations, also serving as the Communication Coordinator and Vice President. Mary is currently completing her tenure as the President of the Southwest District. Mary has been married for 51 years and has two sons and three grandchildren. Her hobbies include researching her genealogy, traveling and digital scrapbooking.

TREASURER – Donna Spear (GC)



Donna Spear has been a member of United Methodist Women for close to 30 years.

She and her husband Todd enjoy living in Tampa and are enthusiastic members of Allendale UMC in St. Petersburg. Donna is a retired high school mathematics teacher, and currently spends much of her time enjoying her two grandsons, supporting her elderly mother, and continuing to rehab a 100+ year-old house. She is passionate about United Methodist Women and has served in various positions in her local unit, district, and currently as FCUMW Treasurer. A few years back, Donna attended Mission U for the first time and hasn't missed one since, serving as Business Manager and Assistant Dean. United Methodist Women has not only provided opportunities to learn, grow, and work for justice, but has been an avenue to meet some amazing women whose friendships she cherishes.

SECRETARY PROGRAM RESOURCES – Jackie Brooks (NE)



Hello! my name is **Jacqueline Brooks**, but I like to be called (**Jackie**). I am member of Mount Zion UMC in Jacksonville and serve as the President of our unit. I have also held several positions with our District Leadership in the Northeast area and have served as our Conference Secretary for the past two years.

LANGUAGE COORDINATORS

HAITIAN – Natacha Etienne Joseph (SE)



My name is **Natacha Etienne Joseph**, I was born in Port Au Prince Haiti, I moved to Chicago Illinois at the age of 14 years old where I Completed my education in health care field in 2002. **I am a Daughter, a Mother, a Wife, a professional and above all a woman of God.** I became a member of North

Side Church of God, Directed by Pastor Ramses Bertrand, in 1999 there, I accepted Christ as my savior and Baptized in 2003. As a member I had different roles such as Benevolent Ministry President and the director the church food pantry, I served as the Music Ministry Secretary and Vice President of the Children Ministry.

In July 2008 I moved to Miami Florida and became a Member of Grace Haitian United Methodist Church in August of the same year. For the past 11 years I have held different leadership roles at G.H.U.M.C such as Finance Ministry Secretary, Treasury, President and Vice President of the Choir, President of Usher Ministry. Taught Sunday School for the youth young adult, Church Event Planning VP/P. Also, a member of the Woman Ministry and Praise Dance Ministry.

Currently I am a member of Shalom Community United Methodist Church as the Vice President of the Finance Ministry. I have been the Florida Conference Haitian Language Coordinator for the past two years. As a conference leader, I am also part of the South East district leadership team, Mission u committee, Program committee and the Haitian Annual convocation committee.

After leaving my 11 years as an Assistant Branch Manager from a financial institution , in 2020 I joined a Credit Union as the Member Service Representative.

Nine years ago, I met a wonderful caring man of God, My friend, my heart Pastor Jean Edner Joseph. We were married in 2019. and we live with our beautiful children, our son Semexant is 28 and our daughter Princess is 26 years old.



HISPANIC – Maria Escobales (GC)

I was born in Puerto Rico, and I am an Army brat who was raised Catholic; joined the Methodist Church 14 years ago. I have taught Sunday School; participated in bible studies, fundraising events, and have participated in organizing the events. I am a Member of Skycrest UMC in Clearwater, FL and I joined our UMW unit in March 2015. The first year as a member, for a fundraiser, I compiled and edited a cookbook for the unit. I am active in my circle and substitute for our circle leader when she is not available. I served 2 years as President and during the past Covid year, I was acting-President. I care about children, the elderly and, volunteer within my church.

KOREAN – Jiyeon (Sophia) Pak (GC)



Jiyeon Sophia Pak was born on March 31, 1976 in South Korea. Sophia immigrated with family to America at the age of 4 with her parents and three older brothers. Her father, Kun Won Yu was a UMC and KUMC pastor until he passed away, on September 21, 2018. During his last 17 years, he lived as a missionary in Peru. Sophia is a wife to husband Jun Pak, married for over 20 years. She has two children, Aaron (18) and Isabelle (14). Sophia has been teaching in Hillsborough County for the past 18 years where she is currently teaching Language Arts in high school. Sophia is currently an active member of the Tampa Korean United Methodist church. Sophia has served on the Committee on Nominations for the Florida Conference. Her passion is doing short term mission trips both locally and internationally. Her retirement plan is to follow her father's footsteps to be a missionary till her last breath to give glory to God, just like her father.

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS CLASS OF 2025

Two Vacant Positions

South East District at Mission u

Sixteen South East District United Methodist Women attended Mission u July 15-17 on-site at the Warren Willis Camp and Conference Center at Fruitland Park. Mission u was so much fun—as well as spiritually uplifting. Being able to interact with each other face to face on the beautiful wooded grounds of the WWCCC was such a joy. Mission u Dean Pam Davis, a member of the SE District First Boca Unit, was so right when she wrote in an email after the event: *“We were socially distanced and masked in the auditorium. As I looked out from the stage over the people of the Florida Conference, there was a true sense of relational normalcy! Yes, virtual people who attended both the June and July sessions embraced each other through Zoom. But the face-to-face made it seem more intimate!”*

Our group photo below of 12 of the SE District Mission u participants shows how much they enjoyed Mission u at the Life Enrichment Center (oops, my mistake—it’s now the Warren Willis Camp and Conference Center). Same place, just a different name. Hope to see you all this fall at our Florida Conference UMW Spiritual Retreat!



L to R: Dreena Robinson, Sharyn Ladner, Debbie Woolsey, Dean Pam Davis, Edith Zewadski-Bricker, Patricia Tabois, Kim Youngblood, Gina Mentor, Jane Cole, Ruth Jean-Pierre, Judith Pierre Okerson, Paulet Royes-Neale.

Sharyn Ladner, President
South East District United Methodist Women

Greeting fellow sisters,

I am pleased to announce that several of our churches have returned to in person services. Other churches are planning on opening their doors during the coming months. Traditionally, quarter two is our inactive period, due to graduations and planned vacations; one of our units **Mt. Zion UMW** had a Mother's Day event online with four guest speakers and twenty-five individuals in attendance and it was very well received.

1st United Methodist Women of Jacksonville has already announced that they will be hosting the Spiritual Growth Study, "Bearing Witness in the Kingdom," on August 14th, 2021, this will be an onsite free event with limited attendance (40) to promote social distancing. This event is posted on our website as well as Facebook so all who wish to attend are invited.

Mandarin United Methodist Women is looking forward to having their Craft Festival on October 3rd, 2021, to ensure their pledge is met.

Fernandia Memorial will host, "No Room At the Inn" December 3-4. For this event, they invite their church family to share their nativity displays with the larger community (the public is invited). I believe the times are 10 am - 4 pm. All their Circles bring their unique displays from around the world and others that have special meaning to them. The Circles provide guides and servers for refreshments at this event. They take donations which are given to the **Coalition for the Homeless of Nassau County**.

For Quarter two our projected remittance is lower than last year at this time, I do anticipate our pledges will increase as more of our churches open for on site services. Please submit your remittance for quarter three by October 5, 2021, to Kayla McGruder (District Treasurer), 6443 Thurgood Cir W. Jacksonville Florida 32219.

Yours in Christ,

Mozelle Thomas,
North East Florida District President

"Praise God to whom all Blessing Flow"



**FLORIDA CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
2022 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

January 7-9	District Officer's Training	WWUMCC, Fruitland Park*
January 22	Mission u Committee Meeting	Zoom
January 29	Program Committee Meeting	Zoom
February 12	Leadership Team / Membership Emphasis	Zoom
February 26	CON Committee Meeting	Zoom
March 12	Haitian Convocation	to Be Determined
March 19	Program Committee Meeting	Zoom
March 26	Mission u Committee Meeting	Zoom
April 9	CON District Training	Zoom
April 23	Leadership Team / Charter for Racial Justice	Zoom
May 14	Program Committee Meeting	Zoom
May 20-22	Assembly	Orlando
May 28	Mission u Committee Meeting	Zoom
June 9-11	Florida Annual Conference - UMC	Lakeland
July 15-17 ?	Mission u Event	to Be Determined
August 5	Program Committee Meeting	Lakeland
August 6	Mission u/Finance Committees	Lakeland
Aug. 29-Sept. 6	General Conference - UMC	Minneapolis, MN
September 9-11	Spiritual Enrichment Retreat	WWUMCC, Fruitland Park*
October 1	Leadership Team / Membership Emphasis	Lakeland
November 2-4	SEJ Conference	Lake Junaluska, NC
November 19	Conference Annual Meeting	to Be Determined
December 4	Advent Retreat	Zoom

Florida Conference United Methodist Women

United Methodist Women of
The United Methodist Church
450 Martin Luther King, Jr.
Ave Lakeland, FL 33801

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Contact: Leah Pittard
United Methodist Women's
Communications Committee
rockpit38@gmail.com

August 2021 *Genesis*



Make It Happen!

FLORIDA CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Calendar of Events - 2021

September 10-12	Spiritual Enrichment Retreat	Virtual Via Eventbrite
October 2	Leadership Team/ Membership Emphasis	zoom
November 6	Conference Annual Meeting	First UMC - Lakeland
December 4	Goals & Evaluations	Lakeland

See you at the Spiritual Enrichment Retreat
Friday – Sunday – September 10 – 12, 2021
Virtual – via zoom – Registration in this *Genesis*
Gather your unit together for fellowship and
Growth --- *Created with Love.*