

THE SHARING LINE

A PUBLICATION OF UNITED WOMEN OF FAITH — PACIFIC NORTHWEST CONFERENCE

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DEB'S DISPATCH

As I write this edition of *Deb's Dispatch* for our Fall **SHARING LINE**, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for each of you who are saying "YES" to a wide variety of leadership and membership opportunities within United Women in Faith. Looking at my ever-changing calendar, I realize, along with each of you, how full of activity our local units, churches, and personal lives become as we approach this season of fall and head into Advent! Throughout all of this "busy-ness," I encourage you to remember to breathe and take time for healing, spiritual renewal, and gratitude.

Where is our Creator calling you, specifically, to be the hands and feet of Christ? Delving deeper into our theme of our recent Conference Annual Gathering of United Women in Faith (I personally like the concept of "gathering" rather than "meeting"), let us individually and communally discern what that means for us.

- How is your planning for 2024 addressing the ever-expanding world in which we are called to be in mission and ministry?

- Are we willing to look with "new" eyes and hearts as to how we are IMPACTING, INSPIRING, and INFLUENCING women within our communities, nation, and world?
- Are we willing to mentor new leadership and support creative visions of what "being in mission" may look like?
- How are fertile fields being cultivated in order that healthy new starts will be able to flourish?
- How are we allowing ourselves to be "pruned" in order that God's light may gain access and renew us as new branches are strengthened in order to produce healthy fruit?

Recently, I completed the basic course for Lay Servant Ministry, and in this process, one of the steps was to complete a survey assessing spiritual gifts. I had not done this for nearly 10 years, and I was surprised to notice some changing results. I would encourage you to take this survey. There is a free source from umcdiscipleship.org (spiritual gifts survey), and it easily compiles your responses. You may be

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THE PURPOSE

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities.



United
Women
in Faith

JURISDICTION UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH QUADRENNIAL EVENT

MAY 9-11, 2024

EARLY REGISTRATION

NOVEMBER 30, 2023: \$295

REGULAR REGISTRATION

DECEMBER THROUGH APRIL 15, 2024: \$345



WJUMW.COM

COME TO JURISDICTION IN ALASKA!

Greetings, United Women of Faith!

Registration is now open for the **Western Jurisdiction United Women in Faith Quadrennial Gathering in Anchorage, Alaska!** Please register at wjumw.com, where you will find detailed information on the hotel, Alaska Airlines discounts, time schedules, and workshop opportunities. Hotel Captain Cook offers the option of adding three additional days before or after our gathering if you'd like to extend your stay and take the opportunity to see more of Alaska.

We're excited about this chance to **"Get Together" at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage on May 9-11, 2024.** (pre-events start May 8, 2024). Our theme, "Get Together," is centered in John 13:34, and all the jurisdictions share it. This theme feels especially relevant after having to cancel the 2020 in-person event and move to online only. After eight

years, our team is eager to gather **in person**, as we're sure you are! The central purpose of this event is to elect women who will represent our jurisdiction as National Board of Director members. In addition, we will worship, celebrate, share, serve, learn, sing, pray and connect.

The past several years of planning have been unusually challenging due to the pandemic. Still, our team is delighted with how well the many aspects of our event have come together to showcase our values and priorities while also highlighting the rich diversity and many cultures of Alaska. **We're honored to have Amy Valdez Barker, PhD as our keynote speaker and Makeda McCreary as**

2024 WESTERN
JURISDICTION
Get Together!



United
Women
in Faith

our music director. This will also be an opportunity to **meet Sally Vonner, our new General Secretary/CEO, and our President, 'Ainise 'Isama'u.** It is our prayer that this event will be an opportunity for each of you to rest and be renewed as we celebrate our work as United Women of Faith together. Early registration goes through Nov. 30, 2023, offering you an opportunity to save \$50. Thank you for your continued support of all we do as United Women of Faith! We hope to see you in Anchorage!

2024 PACIFIC NORTHWEST CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH CONFERENCE CALENDAR

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
January 13	1 – 4 pm	Winter Conference United Women in Faith Executive Meeting	Zoom
January 23	7 pm, ET	Conference Officer Briefing	Zoom
February 9	9 am – 3 pm	Washington Interfaith Advocacy Day	Olympia, WA
TBA		Spring Conference United Women in Faith Executive Meeting	TBA
April 19-21		District/Conference Leadership Training Event	Lazy F Camp & Retreat Center, Ellensburg, WA
April 23		General Conference	Charlotte, North Carolina
May 9-11		Western Jurisdiction Quadrennial Meeting	Anchorage, Alaska
June		Pacific Northwest UMC Conference Annual Meeting	TBA
July 18-19		Summer Conference United Women in Faith Executive Meeting	Wesley UMC, Yakama, WA
July 19-21		Mission u	Wesley UMC, Yakima, WA
September		Inland Missional District Annual Meeting	TBA
September		Puget Sound Missional District	TBA
September		Seven Rivers Missional District Annual Meeting	TBA
September		SeaTac Missional District Annual Meeting	TBA
September		Crest to Coast Missional District Annual Meeting	TBA
October 18		Fall Conference United Women in Faith Executive Meeting	Spokane Valley UMC, Spokane, WA
October 18-19		Conference United Women in Faith Annual Meeting	Spokane Valley UMC, Spokane, WA

CHECK THE CALENDAR ON OUR WEBSITE FOR THE LATEST UPDATES.

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surprised to learn that varied life experiences may impact what gifts bubble to the surface for you. Once you have the results, I encourage you to reflect on how your gifts and graces are being shared within United Women in Faith.

Let us continue to reflect on **Philippians 3:14-19** shared at our Olympia Gathering...." I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I am not turning back". **We will always be stronger when we run together.**

May you continue to be renewed on your Journey.

Deb Avery
Serving as your president
Pacific Northwest
Conference of
United Women in
Faith
360-281-0766
Davery51@q.com

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Deb,

Thank you for bringing a smile to my face and heart this afternoon as I read your email and saw the pictures. I rejoice with you for how inspiring your annual meeting celebration was and that you replicated the anointing from my installation service. I pray and trust that everyone that attended will keep the fire of hope alive as you and they move into the world as the presence of Jesus Christ. God's mission through us will be blessed indeed.

I'm so glad that our national president could be with you, along with her daughter. 'Ainise is an inspiration to all who encounter her.

Thank you and your leadership team for all you do on behalf of United Women in Faith.

Blessings,

Sally

Sally Vonner
General Secretary/Chief Executive Officer
United Women in Faith



President, Deb Avery with newly elected conference officers: Stell Wallace, Vice President; Jan Catrell and Melissa Bortnick, Nominations Committee Members; Sophia Agtarap, Spiritual Growth; Jenny Bygland, Secretary and Communications; Linda Key, Treasurer; Marsha Aufenkamp, Nomination Committee Chair; Gail Simpson, Membership Nurture and Outreach. (Not pictured: Sara Krum, Social Action; Chidi Okoros, Education and Interpretation)



Donna Gaddy and Linda Mills at the registration table.



Collection for Olympia First UMC's outreach programs

WE RECEIVED A WARM WELCOME FROM OLYMPIA FIRST UMC UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

WE OFFERED OUR THANKS TO RETIRING OFFICERS

Committee on Nominations Chair, Linda Key, offered thanks to our retiring officers.



Sharon McDaniel
Spiritual Growth
Mission Coordinator



Linda Mills, SeaTac Missional
District President



Stell Wallace,
National
Director



Conference Treasurer, Kendra
Smith, lighting the Mission Magic
Candle.



Deb Avery, Polyana Isama'u, and 'Ainise 'Isama'u raised their voices in song.

INSPIRING WORSHIP WITH MUSIC AND COMMUNION, ANOINTING WITH OILS, AND A STIRRING MESSAGE



Patty Mitchell Upton led our music.

DEB AVERY INVITED THE DISTRICT PRESIDENTS UP TO DECORATE THE ALTAR WITH ITEMS THAT REPRESENTED THEIR DISTRICTS.



SeaTac District President, Linda Mills



Seven Rivers District President, Barb Stout



Puget Sound District President, Jeannine Lish



Crest to Coast District President, Bev Thomas



Inland District Vice President, Patsy Charlson

**WE CELEBRATED
COMMUNION &
REMEMBERED THOSE
LOST SINCE WE LAST
GATHERED.**



Rev. Heather Sparkman led us in communion.



Marsha Aufenkamp and Linda Mills led us in a memorial service for those lost since our last annual meeting.



Lining up for communion.



Sue Raymond give the communion elements to 'Polyana Isama'u.



Sue Raymond give the communion elements to 'Ainise 'Isama'u.



NATIONAL PRESIDENT 'AINISE 'ISAMA'U, LED US IN AN INSPIRING MESSAGE; THE NEWLY ELECTED CONFERENCE OFFICERS WERE ANOINTED, THEN EVERYONE CAME FORWARD TO BE ANOINTED.

'Ainise 'Isama'u and daughter, Polyana Isama'u.



District Presidents, Jeannine Lish, Barb Stout, Bev Thomas, Linda Mills, and, filling in for Judy Dirks, Patsy Charlson



Anointing with oils.

Jeannine Lish anointing Kendra Smith with oil.



Stell Wallace giving the closing benediction.

MEET OUR NEW OFFICERS

SOPHIA AGTARAP, SPIRITUAL GROWTH



Sophia is a pathfinder. A 1.5 generation Filipina American who values curiosity and wonder as

she navigates the world. She works alongside individuals and communities in the areas of justice, equity, diversity, and belonging, as they do the brave and hard work of imagining the world they want to build and animating others to create a more just society where all may thrive.

MARSHA AUFENKAMP—CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

Seven Rivers Missional District – Omak, WA Unit

At age 12, I was confirmed and Baptized in the Palo Alto, CA UMC in 1951. After marriage and several moves, we settled in Omak in 1976. Our daughter and son were involved in a Youth Group and Lazy F. In 1985, I was invited to a UMW meeting and life started getting busier! In 2007, at the Columbia River District Meeting, I was Installed as Mission Coordinator for Education and Interpretation. After holding that job for three years, the PNW UMW offered me that position. When our Unit President passed away, I stepped into that position. In 2014, I was Secretary of Program Resources for four years AND Legacy Liaison for

the PNW (which I have held for almost ten years!). In 2018, I became Seven Rivers' president for that four-year term. I am now a voting delegate at Western Jurisdiction in May 2024 and am now starting in the position of Chair of Nominations for the Pacific Northwest United Women in Faith. What a pleasure it is to serve and enjoy the company of women who also serve “faith, hope, and love in action.”

Blessings,
Marsha

MELISSA JOY BORTNICK—COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS MEMBER



I am a 48-year-old, cis-gender heterosexual female, Caucasian mother of three

teenage children. My pronouns are she/her, and I profess inclusive political and theological leanings. I was married for 22 years and am recently divorced, thankfully, with full-time care of my children. I have one younger sister and two living parents who all reside out of state. I earned my Master of Divinity from Seattle Pacific Seminary and my undergraduate degrees in Biology and Chemistry from North Central College and the University of Illinois. Currently, I work as a Chaplain at the University of Washington Medical Center.

Prior to my work in clinical

chaplaincy, I served as a Licensed Local Pastor, an interim pastor in Snoqualmie, WA, and as a Children's, Youth, and Family minister at Faith UMC Issaquah. Also, with the UMC, I've worked in the Office of Connectional Ministry, serving as administrative staff in the executive conference office. I've worked as an educator for many years; I taught undergraduate theology courses at SPU as a Graduate Teaching Assistant and worked as a public high school Biology and Chemistry teacher near Chicago. My passion for education and service, combined with a faithful desire to magnify healing and justice in my community, encourages me to pursue chaplaincy.

I've been active in the UMC since my baptism and have raised my children in the church. As the newest member of the PNW Committee on Nominations, I'm also a new Deaconess Candidate. I hope to connect with many women in our local region and share the work of this group with others.

Phone: 630-886-8643

Email: bortnickm@spu.edu

Facebook: Melissa Cree Bortnick

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/melissa-bortnick-05a3a1157/>

JA NET' W. CROUSE, ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR

From a southern Idaho farm Ja net' went to the College of Idaho graduating with a B.S. in chemistry. During graduate school at Oregon State University, she met and married Dale from California. They

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traveled east to the University of Delaware, planning to stay three years but remaining over thirty. Here they raised two daughters who both moved west after college.

Ja net' changed her professional focus to history and earned a M.A. and Ph.D. with an emphasis on History of American Foreign Policy. She taught at the University and other local colleges, became an advocate for public education through the local School Board, state PTA, and National PTA, and was a project director for reading and discussion programs in Delmarva Libraries.

In fall 2000 Ja net' and Dale moved to East Wenatchee. Younger daughter Sarah Crouse lives in Seattle. Daughter Jennifer Talbot is across the river in Wenatchee with her husband Tony and their three sons and daughter, ages 18-9. Their oldest daughter lives with her husband and two children in Spokane. Their oldest son works in Ephrata.

Ja net' with Dale selected Trinity United Methodist Church before they found a home. Her first experience with United Women in Faith began here in 2000. She started at the local unit as vice president and then president, advanced to Seven Rivers District in 2004 as Secretary for Program Resources (4 years) and then Vice President (1), and joined the PNW Conference in 2009 serving as Social Action (4), Vice President (4), and member Nomination Committee. From April 2018-October 2022 she was President.

Again, she was president for her local United Women in Faith at Trinity and then Bridges UWF at 1st Wenatchee UMC until fall September 2023. Twice she taught classes for Mission u (Native American Survival and Roma). United Women in Faith has become a commitment for Ja net'.

She writes, "Teaching is a passion that allows me to continue learning. For fun I treasures times with my Grands and special vacations with my daughters, walk my dog and watch for birds along the Columbia River, and read. You can recognize my home by the stacks of books."

LINDA KEY, TREASURER

Linda grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, before moving out West, first to Northern California, then to Washington. Raised and baptized in the Mennonite church while living in the Midwest and then becoming a Methodist after moving to Washington. Linda always felt the need as a Christian to be connected to other Christians, and the church was the perfect place. The camping programs provided such positive experiences for the youth, so the local church at Grandview established the group "Kids for Kamp." Many fundraisers were held to raise money to provide camperships to enable the youth to attend camp at one of the conference-owned camps. After being involved with the Kids for Camp group, Linda was invited to join United Methodist Women and become the secretary for the Columbia River District's Mission team. Other district leadership positions would include Vice President, Nominations Committee,

and President.

As Mission Coordinator for Spiritual Growth on the Pacific NW UMW team, Linda led two spiritual growth retreats, both held at Lazy F Camp and Retreat Center out of Ellensburg, WA. The purpose of both retreats was to give the participants time to regroup, refresh, and rebuild their relationship with God through Jesus Christ. After four years as Vice President and learning what it takes to lead a meeting that provides useful information as well as celebrating the successes of United Methodist Women, Linda's goal as chair of nominations is to find leaders who reflect the diversity of the membership within the conference, and are women of faith, hope, and love in action, and whose purpose is to share God's love as whole persons through Christ. As far as her professional life, Linda spent thirty years working for one of the largest agricultural operations in Washington State. First in Accounts payable, then in purchasing and becoming a Certified Purchasing Manager. As the Purchasing Manager, Linda helped manage a 100-million-dollar budget for the operation. That experience will help her as Treasurer and keep track of monies spent. As chair of the standing rules committee, she endeavored to present a clear guideline for our leadership team and members on how funds are to be spent as we contribute to the National Organization of United Women in Faith's budget to fund programming for Women, Children, and Youth.

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MARILYN SANCHEZ-REID, NOMINEE FOR NATIONAL DIRECTOR

She is a humble servant child of God from Lynnwood, WA, a long-time member of Ronald UMC, married for 21 years and going 22 next month to Dennis Reid.

She grew up surrounded by church volunteers and workers, and this contributes to her desire to reach out, to serve through missions, to serve the people not just in the church but also in the community here and outside the United States. She has a passion for justice, deep faith and relationship with God, and changing priorities in life to put faith and be the hands and feet of Christ for the changing world of the UMC.

GAIL SIMPSON—MEMBERSHIP NURTURE AND OUTREACH



I am Gail Simpson. I have been a lifelong methodist. As a child, I was baptized at First UM in

Yakima. When that church was sold to the Yakima Mall, my family participated at Wesly UMC, where I joined the church in junior high. During my first job as an occupational therapist, I lived in Spokane, where I joined Manito UMC.

In my 44 years of marriage, I have lived in 14 different houses/apartments in 10 different cities across the United States. Your first

thought might be she is part of a military family. No, I am the wife of a United Methodist pastor who went to seminary in Boston and Southern California before moving back to the Pacific Northwest Conference. We have lived in Pomeroy, Leavenworth, Grandview, Chehalis, Parkland, and Tacoma. I have joined many UM churches and participated in many UMW units across the conference. Several of the last churches we were at did not have UMW units. Following my husband's retirement, we visited several churches in the Tacoma area. During the past year, I have joined Mason United Methodist Church and am excited to participate in the local United Women in Faith unit.

When employed, I worked as an occupational therapist in schools and rehab settings. I later went back to school and obtained my teaching certificate. I spent the last 20 years as a preschool special education teacher. Helping families of special needs children navigate the system is a passion of mine. I was also active in the union and continue to work for the rights of educators by participating in the Washington Education Association retired group. I believe that social justice and the inclusion of all are vital to a functional society. Although I would not consider myself a political activist, I am willing to support the school board and legislative candidates striving to provide policies focused on the best interest of children and the learning opportunities available to them.

We have three adult children: two who live close by in Yakima,

Washington, and Troutdale, Oregon, and the other who lives farther away, in Suffolk, Virginia. This provides opportunities for visiting our five grandchildren.

A few years ago, I was invited to join the conference team, but I was still working full-time. Following my retirement in September 2022, the nominations committee contacted me again and asked if I was ready to join the team. Although I have a lot to learn about the position, I am looking forward to being on the United Women in Faith conference team and serving you in the area of Membership Nurture and Outreach. I would like to see new ways of offering participation to include more persons in United Women in Faith. I would love to hear your ideas. Feel free to call or text me at (253) 229-0343 or email me at jsimpsfam@comcast.net.

I look forward to working with and for you.

Gail Simpson

STELL WALLACE (A.K.A. ESTELLA WALLACE), VICE PRESIDENT

- Born in Dallas, TX
- #5 of 6 siblings in a blended family
- Moved to Bellevue, WA, in the 1960s
- Married to Jeff Wallace, retired firefighter from Puyallup/Central Pierce
- Children:
 - ◇ Sara, Middle School Principal who is married with 2 sons

- ◇ Brad, Ellensburg Firefighter & Wildland Firefighter who is married with 2 daughters
- Undergraduate degree in K-12 Special Education & Elementary Education
- Graduate degree in Multidisciplinary Specialization in At-Risk Youth and Curriculum Development
- Taught in Edmonds, Puyallup, and Franklin Pierce School Districts for 40 years
- First Term on the national board of directors for United Methodist Women and the Chair of Finance for the organization
- Past board member for Tacoma Community House, Tacoma, WA. This is a National Mission Institution for United Methodist Women
- My interests and hobbies:
 - ◇ Volunteering for my UMW position, which requires extensive traveling and speaking
 - ◇ Volunteering at my church to include fundraising programs, local UMW participation, and the Ellensburg Community Clothing Center
 - ◇ Lay Member to Annual Conference
 - ◇ Traveling by plane, RV, or car
 - ◇ Family events involving grandchildren, annual family camping event, and visiting my last sibling in Ft Worth
 - ◇ Being involved in Ruth Harrington's scholarship lunch and dinner groups
 - ◇ Playing cards and games with family and my Bunco group
- Currently, as of 10/16/2023
 - ◇ Laity for one of the Seven Rivers Cohort groups for the church
 - ◇ UWF National Governance Committee
 - ◇ Finishing my 2nd term (8th year) as a National Board Director
 - ◇ Copresident of my unit
 - ◇ Lay member to Annual Conference



Installation of the Seven Rivers District Officers at their September 2023 Annual Meeting.

TREASURER'S MESSAGE

The Annual Meeting in Olympia was a wonderful experience – it had a slightly different format; it was relaxed in that we were open to new people and stories. We had guests who did not know much about us as an organization but said yes to participating. We had 'Ainise 'Isama'u, our National President, speak. Our host church, Olympia 1st, an active, vibrant church, made us feel very welcome. There was generosity in giving from those there – the offering for Missions was \$2,217.00.

The Conference banking accounts have been changed to reflect our new name, and two districts have made the change, with another in process. The last two will be completed soon. Some local units have made the change. I have all the information you need to start the conversation with your bank. And can help with any questions or issues that may arise. If you want to change your bank or are changing the signers on the account, now is an excellent time to consider making the name change.

This is my last newsletter article. After many years as a local and district treasurer and the previous five years as your Conference Treasure, I will leave it to other competent hands. Serving this organization of women has been a great experience. Thank you!

*Kendra Smith
Outgoing Treasurer
Pacific Northwest Conference
United Women in Faith*

GET INVOLVED WITH THE 2024 READING PROGRAM

Find the new 2024 Reading List here:

<https://uwfaithresources.org/download.cfc?method=ProductDownload&storekey=umw&printfileID=7943>

OTHER WAYS TO RECEIVE READING PROGRAM CREDIT

• Books from the 2019, 2020, 2021–2022, 2023, and 2024 Reading Program lists are all eligible for Reading Program reporting credit. You can find a combined list of all these books at bit.ly/RPBookList.

• You are always welcome to use audiobooks if that's an easier and more accessible way to read the material.

• You can also receive Reading Program reporting credit for:

- ◇ Listening to the Faith Talks podcast: 1 credit in Spiritual Growth for 2+ episodes
- ◇ Listening to the Voices from the Field podcast: 1 credit in Education for Mission for 2+ episodes
- ◇ Reading response magazine: 1 credit in Nurturing for Community for reading one year (6 issues)
- ◇ Reading Program reporting credit can also be earned for being part of a Mission u study:
- ◇ 1 credit in Spiritual Growth for reading a Mission u* study on your own
- ◇ 2 credits in Spiritual Growth for joining a Mission u* study together with others as a leader or participant

• Several movies are also available for Reading Program reporting credit, including Hidden Figures, Pushout, and The Hate U Give. In determining the category for credit, identify the category of the original book and apply credit for the film to the same category.

* About Mission u:

Each year, Mission u offers curricula for children, youth, and adults around one biblical or theological theme, with emphasis on spiritual growth, social action, and the global ministry of the church. _ Mission u 2023: Jesus' teachings in the Gospels proclaim the good news of the kin-dom or reign (basileia) of God. Jesus mentions the kin-dom 90 times in the Synoptic Gospels! What does the Bible tell us about God's basileia, and why do we call it the kin-dom? For Jesus, the kin-dom was not simply something to talk about, but something we could live and experience. From the Lord's Prayer to the Beatitudes to the

2024 Reading Program Programa De Lectura 독서 프로그램



parables, this good news is at the heart of Jesus' preaching, teaching, and ministry.

Mission u 2024: The 2024 Mission u curricula continues the theme of Living the Kin-dom, deepening our study of the ways Jesus preached and ministered in proximity to the kin-dom among the marginalized. We will focus on the ways Jesus invites us to transform our lives, our selves, and our communities in ways that bring us closer to the reign of God.

NEWS FROM THE DISTRICTS

REFLECTIONS FROM SEATAC MISSIONAL DISTRICT

The SeaTac Missional District of United Women in Faith held its first in-person Annual Meeting on Saturday, September 30, 2023, at Kent United Methodist Church. This was our first in-person gathering since our Annual Meeting in 2019. Everyone who attended was excited to see old faces and make new friends. We had 48 women who attended, more than we had when we held these meetings on Zoom for the past three years. Our District was well represented with women from Auburn First, Beacon, Des Moines, Federal Way, Haller Lake, Kent, Mason (Tacoma), Riverton Park, St. Peter's and Trinity. Additional church women had registered but were unable to join us.

We chose Climate Justice as our social justice focus. Our theme, "For the Beauty of the Earth," was shared by our Keynote Speaker, Rev. Laura Baumgartner, Pastor of Haller Lake United Methodist Church in Seattle and Board Chair of Earth Ministry: Washington Interfaith Power & Light. Her program was interactive and gave us opportunities for discussion with others during the presentation and reflection on the topic. We would encourage you to contact her to present at your unit.

We had a wonderful continental breakfast and soup luncheon from the women at Kent UMC. It is essential for us to have time for socializing and discussing the happenings as the meeting progresses.

Awards were made for Mission Today Units, Racial Justice Unit, Reading Program, and 5- and 7-Star Units for Giving.

We retired two Officers: Ileeda Denman, who is the President of the Federal Way Unit and has served as the District Membership Nurture and Outreach Coordinator since 2018, and Marilyn Glasscock, who is the recent past President of Auburn First unit and has served as our Spiritual Growth Coordinator from 2018-2019 and Social Action Coordinator since 2019. We thank both of you for your service. They received [Special Mission Recognition Pins](#).

We also recognize Linda Mills, our past President of the SeaTac Missional District, for her years of service from 2019 until 2023. She has graciously agreed to continue on the board as the Membership Nurture and Outreach Coordinator. Diana Wilson has stepped up to be President of the SeaTac Missional District and continues as Communication Coordinator. Diana has been a member of the board in various capacities since 2012.

We had a very moving and inspirational remembrance ceremony and recognized 30 women from our various churches who passed in 2023.

We had positive evaluation comments. One note of interest is in the past, the women have asked for more singing. This year, we sang a lot

of hymns. Their comments included "too many hymns." That brought forth a good chuckle. I think we were trying to make up for lost time.

UNIT HAPPENINGS:

St. Peter's UMC Unit has been conducting a warm clothing and bedding drive to support Riverton Park UMC, which is hosting a large group of asylum seekers. They started with 50, and that grew to 180, and at the latest count, they are serving 300 people. Our local news has followed the story, and FAN (Faith Action Network) and others have encouraged all local Methodist churches to participate. These people have come from warm weather countries, so this may be their first winter with freezing weather in the Pacific Northwest.

I look forward to working with the SeaTac District and the Conference Boards this year to promote United Women in Faith.

*Blessings to all,
Diana Wilson
SeaTac Missional District President*

CREST TO COAST MISSIONAL DISTRICT



Joan Hackett (Crest to Coast district coordinator of Membership Nurture and Outreach), along with her daughter, Joanne, share a historical perspective on the role of women in ministry with the United Methodist Church. On Laity Sunday, October 15, 2023, they were focusing on Dorothy Northcutt and how she pioneered as the first female clergy at Fern Prairie UMC in Crest to Coast District and how she empowered other young women in ministry such as Rev. Carol Davies, Bishop Maryann Swenson, and Rev. Carol Mariano. This may inspire you to take a look at the impact made by women in your congregations and celebrate those stories. ♥

*Bev Thomas, President,
Crest To Coast Missional District*

VICE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Who will you invite
to the sisterhood of
United Women in Faith?



WHY I DO WHAT I DO

Hello, Pacific Northwest Conference. After four years on the Jurisdiction team and eight years on the Board of Directors for our National organization, I have met my tenure and can again focus on our wonderful conference.

United Women in Faith at any level is still my #1 "go-to" when I see needs in my local community and worldwide. We get things done. Our new Bishop has said those very words about our organization.

We've changed, and for the good. This organization needs to be for all women looking for a faith-based organization where there are like-minded women wanting to make a difference by extending themselves. We offer fellowship, leadership training, and opportunities, and we challenge with our social action to improve the lives of women, children, and youth. It is where I want to be.

Join in, stretch yourself, bring others with you, and combine your resources with 500,000 others and their resources so we can make a difference. Be that person willing to take a risk. I said **YES** and have never looked back. May peace and grace abound, my friends.

*Stell Wallace,
Vice President*



NEWS FROM NATIONAL

October 19, 2023

Dear United Women in Faith Member,

As part of a sisterhood of women committed to putting faith, hope, and love into action, I am reaching out with an important message. After much prayer and deep reflection, United Women in Faith is taking several steps to adjust to the organization's current financial reality and remain faithful stewards of the resources entrusted to the organization.

I want you to be among the first to know that due to factors that include a decline in organizational giving, we are enacting a series of cost-saving measures supported by the board of directors who met October 13-14. United Women in Faith will eliminate five staff positions by the end of the year and two additional positions in 2024. We will offer severance, benefits, employment assistance, and education reimbursement to impacted individuals. Please join us in prayer for our affected colleagues, whose good work helped make us the nurturing and impactful sisterhood we are today.

Additionally, we will move our headquarters by the end of the year to the Church Center for the United Nations (CCUN), which we own. This change will mean we will have minimal office space and our staff will work almost fully remotely. You may be aware we changed our mailing address earlier this year to this location.

These measures will help us adapt to a changing church and world, but it was still a difficult and hard decision. As you wrap your mind around this information, please do not lose sight of our mission. United Women in Faith is devoted to uplifting women, children, and youth. I know that in time, like generations of United Women in Faith before us, who survived church disruptions, pandemics, wars, and other societal unrest, we, too, will see brighter days ahead. We will continue to put our love into action. We will see the growth in our giving and membership that we envisioned through our rebranding.

I thank you for your dedication to our beloved organization and solicit your prayers and continued engagement. Please continue to support our missional work with your financial gifts as we build back to the pre-pandemic level. With your consistent giving, we will achieve our goal of being a place for women of faith to find spiritual growth, purpose, belonging, and opportunities for service and advocacy to make an impact in the world. Now is the time to invite women to join us.

Lastly, I know that transitions are difficult. Please know that we are implementing a strategic plan to reposition us for the future to ensure we can be good partners with our communities as well as with women, children, and youth around the world. United Women in Faith wants to be who God has called us to be—united women in faith—and we

need your support to do so. Our ability to thrive depends on you. Let us stand together as the bold, courageous women we have been for 154 years, knowing that with God's help and our love in action, we can change the world.

Yours in Christ,

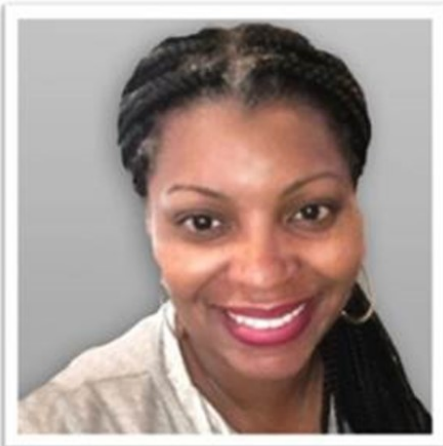
Sally Vonner
General Secretary/Chief Executive Officer
United Women in Faith

NEW NATIONAL ADDRESS

Due to recent issues with receiving mail at 475 Riverside Drive and potential postal fraud, United Women in Faith is using our alternate office address at the Church Center for the United Nations for regular mail. That address is:

United Women in Faith Church
Center for the United Nations
777 United Nations Plaza,
11th Floor New York, NY 10017

MEET KHIA SHAW, TRANSFORMATION OFFICER



After consultation with the Board Personnel Committee, United Women in Faith is happy to announce the appointment of Khia Shaw to the position of Transformation Officer, effective August 14th!

Khia joined the United Women in Faith staff team in 2016 during the onset of the strategic planning process. She was part of the design team that developed the current organizational priorities: Position, Engage, and Mobilize. During her tenure with United Women in Faith, Khia led the priority Position before

transitioning to lead the Engage priority. She has been instrumental in designing new initiatives that align with the organization's strategic plan, has developed metric standards, and introduced marketing as a vital part of program success.

Please join us in welcoming Khia to her new role, which makes her part of the Senior Leadership Team. Due to her knowledge of the organization and familiarity with the work of the Office of Transformation, we are looking forward to a smooth transition of the role from Sally to Khia. We are so pleased to recognize Khia's success and achievements with this promotion and look forward to her continued leadership in the organization.

Congratulations to Khia, and please feel free to message her at kshaw@uwfaith.org!

*Peace and blessings,
Sally Vonner
General Secretary & CEO*

THE NATIONAL LEGACY FUND ENDOWMENT

LEAVE A LEGACY OF LOVE THROUGH THE ENDOWMENT FUND

In 1997, the United Methodist Women PNW Conference created the Endowment Fund. The fund is invested in the Faith Foundation. The guidelines require that 75 percent of the earnings provide grants for leadership and enrichment opportunities for women and 25 percent goes to Mission Giving. The interest earnings have funded scholarships for Assembly and Western Jurisdiction events and contributions to Pledge to Mission and National Legacy. Grants have been given to Atlantic Street Center, Tacoma Community House, and Nome Community House, and in 2023, each received \$640.

In 2022, we provided \$1,600 for women attending the 2022 Assembly, including the Legacy Banquet. In 2023, we reserved \$1,500 for the May 2024 Western Jurisdiction Quadrennial.

In October, the fund total was \$97,900.59. Our goal is to increase the total to \$100,000. This will generate interest for 2024 projects.

The form for contributions is on the website www.pnwumc.org/uwfaith under Digital Downloads, Endowment Fund. You can give these to honor someone. Please encourage your district and local units to contribute to the Endowment Fund.

*Ja net' W. Crouse,
Chair Endowment Committee
PNW Conference
United Women in Faith*

PASTORAL LETTER: PEACE IS OUR WORK, EVERYWHERE



Many people say, "We can't find goodness anywhere. The light of your face has left us, Lord!" But you have filled my heart with more joy than when their wheat and wine are everywhere! I will lie down and fall asleep in peace because you alone, Lord, let me live in safety.
—Psalm 4:6-8, CEB

My family still resides in and around Decatur, Alabama. If you search Decatur, Alabama, you will learn that before the conflict in Palestine-Israel escalated to all-out war, Steve Perkins, a 39-year-old African-American man, was shot by several Decatur Police officers. Steve's death on the front lawn of his home invoked outrage across the city and has sparked protests, rallies, memorials, and other calls for justice and peace. I did not know Steve, but I know Steve's plight. I know what it means to be confronted with violence and live with the threat of death every time I leave my home. With Steve's death, we add to the litany of unarmed Black men who died at the hands of state-sanctioned violence. I wonder if even being home is as safe as I tell myself it should be.

My heart aches for Steve's family. It breaks for families in Israel and Gaza already suffering injury and loss. And it will break again for the Palestinians, Israelis and others who will be caught

in the crossfire as war rages across the area. With people being held captive by colonialist borders and nationalist policies, there is limited personal and communal agency. With powers from far away dictating strategies and funding war efforts, colonization.

Our high aspiration for peace must always come through acts of justice and insurance of equity. We cannot expect peace if injustice and inequities are commonplace. Our pursuit of peace must begin before we hear gunfire or see bombed-out buildings. That work starts in our homes, neighborhoods, community gathering spaces, and churches as we call out and work against all manner of injustice and inequity – especially when we are not the ones directly affected. That's one way we walk in solidarity with those who are unseen, forgotten, mistreated, or dehumanized.

Another way to work for peace in the land is to acknowledge our privilege, dismantle racism, rebut nationalism, and not shy away from calling out discriminatory acts against others. We may feel like the Greater Northwest has its own problems and that those problems are nowhere near as dire as what we are witnessing in Palestine-Israel or Decatur, Alabama, but that is not true.

War anywhere in the world is a sign that everyone has work to do. The only way we bury our heads in the sand is to deny the interconnected nature of life and our globalized economic and war-making alliances. Others may be firing guns and

dropping bombs in Palestine-Israel, Ukraine, Sudan, or Alabama. Still, our country's failure to have difficult conversations, resolve conflict and honor diverse viewpoints keeps us on the brink of war and economic collapse. When we are silent, apathetic, or too busy to bother with it, peace moves farther into the distance. If peace moves away, so does justice and equity.

Amid all that you are facing, holding, and trying to move forward, I pray the weight of these presenting conflicts will not slow or stop you from living as peaceably and boldly as you can. I pray that we will center equity and justice in all the spaces and places of your life to pursue peace constantly, calling attention to the injustice of war-making and anti-peace policies and actions – at home and abroad.

As Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." May these words serve as a daily reminder that today's war on the other side of the globe impacts and is informed by how we live on this side. Let us not grow weary. Instead, let us continue with hope and in pursuit of peace in every place so that we can fall asleep and live lives in peace.

*Peace in Palestine-Israel!
Justice for Steve!
Equity for All!
Amen!*

Cedrick D. Bridgeforth
Resident Bishop, Greater Northwest Episcopal Area

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK



Our FACEBOOK PAGE helps us promote upcoming District, Conference, Western

Jurisdiction and National Events. It is also a great place to share and learn about Social Issues and Action Alerts.

Help us utilize this tool in our mission work by sharing local events or social issues that you are aware of. Find this information and more at our website: pnwumc.org/uwfaith.

OTHER UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH RESOURCE ONLINE

uwfaith.org

Facebook.com/uwwomenfaith

Facebook.com/pnwuwfaith

Instagram.com/uwfaith

Pinterest.com/UMWomen/_created/

Twitter.com/uwwomenfaith

Youtube.com/user/uwfaith

Flickr.com/photos/UMWomen

Leaf photo by Pixabay: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/red-and-brown-leaves-235767/>

PACIFIC NORTHWEST CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH OFFICERS FOR 2024

President—Deb Avery

Vice President—Stell Wallace

Secretary & Communications—Jenny Bygland

Treasurer—Linda Key

Program Resources—OPEN

Education & Interpretation—Chidi Okoros

Membership Nurture & Outreach—Gail Simpson

Social Action—Sara Krum

Spiritual Growth—Sophia Agtarap

Committee on Nominations Chair—Marsha Aufenkamp

Committee on Nominations Member—Melissa Bortnick

Committee on Nominations Member—Janice Catrell

Committee on Nominations Member—Carol Gruen

Missional District Presidents:

Crest to Coast— Bev Thomas

Inland—Judy Dirks

Puget Sound—Jeannine Lish

SeaTac—Diane Wilson

Seven Rivers— Barb Stout

SIGN UP FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER

THE SHARING LINE is the newsletter of the Pacific Northwest Conference United Women in Faith published four times a year. Complimentary copies are sent to the following: Pacific Northwest Conference leaders, local unit presidents, District officers, Conference officers, pastors and District Superintendents.

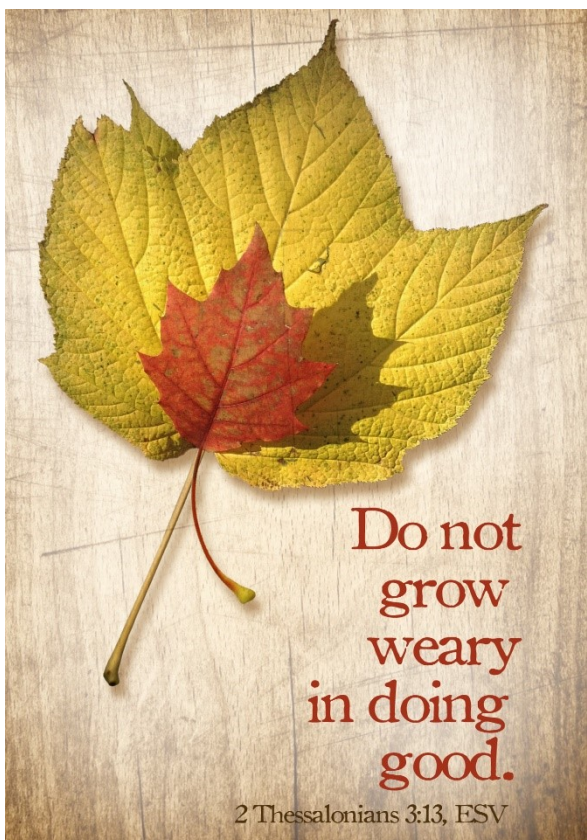
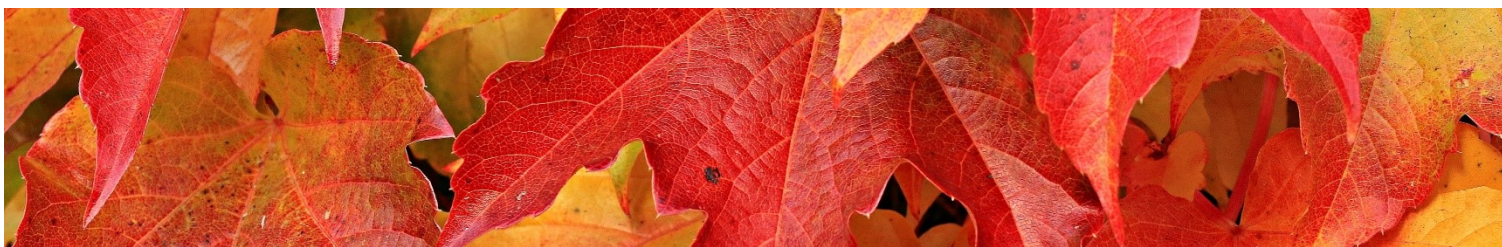
This newsletter is available online at pnwumc.org/uwfaith. To receive email notification when new issues are published, or you wish to receive an email copy, send your email address to: Jenny Bygland at jbygland@kentmethodist.com

SHARING LINE DEADLINE

Anything for the **Winter Sharing Line** should be emailed to Jenny Bygland (jbygland@kentmethodist.com) by **Friday, January 19**. Late articles will be included as space permits.

THE SHARING LINE

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH
PACIFIC NORTHWEST CONFERENCE
PO BOX 13650
DES MOINES WA 98198



Do not
grow
weary
in doing
good.

2 Thessalonians 3:13, ESV

THIS ISSUE

REGISTER FOR JURISDICTION

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