

## *From our Presidents*



It has been a joy to have served as your Conference President for the past four years.

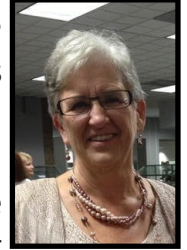
I am grateful for the opportunities I've had to worship, study, learn, laugh and sometimes share tears with you.

One of the greatest joys of my United Methodist Women experiences is the sharing of relationship. This is not just the exclusiveness of personal contacts but also the one that resulted from service on United Methodist Community House board of directors and within the connectional make up of UMW. Our access from the local, to District, to Conference with our national leadership in New York being just a phone call away.

We have accomplished much over the past year and a half in regards to our obligation to the United Methodist Community House. We still have a ways to go and many needs to be met, so I urge your continual support.

Thank you once again for the wonderful experience and memories, I will ask each of you, if asked to serve in leadership roles to consider it an honor and prayerfully consider the opportunity. I look forward to seeing many of you at different events as we continue to put faith, hope and love into action.

Blessings, Jenny Kroeze  
President W MI UMW



Thanks to all who have already welcomed me in this new position and offered support and encouragement. I feel very honored to serve the United Methodist Women of West Michigan Conference.

We will be experiencing some big changes these next few years. We will definitely have to move out of our comfort zones. We will definitely not be able to continue in the mode of, "but we have always done it that way!"

I am so blessed to already know so many of you across our conference. I truly look forward to getting to know many more of you during my next few years as Conference President.

My husband, Jon, and I moved *back* to Mt. Pleasant two years ago after living in Alma for 24 years, where we owned Saravilla Bed and Breakfast. We moved *back* to where we lived our first 25 years together.

We were greeted with, "oh, you're back!" like it had been only a few days, months, or years, not 24! How blessed we are. It was a very easy transition and we love being close to our middle son and his family. We also have a son, in Bozeman, MT and a son and his wife, in Las Vegas. Both fun places to visit! We also have two grandchildren who live in Manistee.

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## 2016 Conference Team

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**Jenny Kroeze (2017)** 3-year term  
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**(Open)** 4-year term

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**Historian — (appointed)** OPEN

### District Presidents:

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**Lansing: Joyce Plumhoff (past president)**  
517-676-2716 [tplumhoff1858@att.net](mailto:tplumhoff1858@att.net)

## *Welcome Sue Rietman*

Hello Ladies;

As of January 2017 I will become the new District President of the Grand Rapids District.

I have been a UMW member since I was a young woman in my Middleville UMW at the Middleville United Methodist Church as were my mother and grandmother before me. I have served as president and vice president of our local unit quite a few times in the past decade in our church.

I live in Middleville, my home town since birth. I am married to Dan who is a double lung transplant recipient with 4 years under

his belt. We have one daughter and five grandchildren and five great grand children.

I chair the Mission Committee at our church and was for eight years the church secretary serving three pastors who served our pulpit in Middleville. I was Education and Interpretation officer on the District for a term. I look forward to my role as District President. I am counting on much help from my fellow officers on the team.

Don't be afraid to share your advice and good ideas.

Susan Rietman  
Grand Rapids District UMW President

## *From Your Book Lady*

Have you checked out this website? <http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/readingprogram/2017>

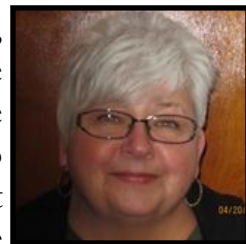
It lists every book in the 2017 Reading Program by category and shows availability of formats. You might have seen the Reading Program catalog for 2017 lists some books for sale for your Kindle or e-reader. Check out your local library system for the printed version if that is the format you prefer.

This is the website for the UMW Store: <http://www.umwmissionresources.org>

This is the last year 2012 books can be counted toward your certificate so those books are all marked down to \$2.00! Books make wonderful gifts! Wasabi Gospel by Shawn Wood is one of my all time favorite Spiritual Growth books and I would recommend giving it to everyone you know!

*Secretary of Program Resources*

The 2017 Program Book, Prayer Calendar, and all the Mission Study books are available at the above site to purchase individually or at your District or Conference events, but an even more economical way to get them is by ordering the Annual Sampler. Click on this link, print the form and mail it in with \$40. <https://s3.amazonaws.com/umw/pdfs/Annual+Sampler+2017.pdf> The Resources will come right to your house and you won't have to pay shipping!



And finally, remember, dinosaurs didn't read and look at what happened to them, so keep reading!

Connie Swinger,  
Sec'y of Program Resources  
[connieswinger@att.net](mailto:connieswinger@att.net) 616-813-4670



***West MI Conference UMW Bus Trip,  
"Faith Journey to Lake Junaluska"***

I just returned from a five-day, *Faith Journey to Lake Junaluska*, with a group of West Michigan United Methodist Women. We visited several missions supported by the UMW along the way, which were very educational and heartwarming. WOW! It was great to renew old friendships and make new ones. Don't miss the next trip.

- ◆ First stop—the Freedom Center Museum in Cincinnati, OH—a city of immigrants—on the Kentucky/Ohio border. We heard amazing and heartbreaking stories about slave trade and the Underground Railroad.
- ◆ Red Bird Mission and School, in Beverly, Kentucky, a highlight for me, exhibits the use of our Prayer and Self-Denial offerings.
- ◆ At North Carolina's Lake Junaluska, where our World Methodist Council has its headquarters, we were taken on a special evening tour. There is so much to see.
- ◆ Then on to Brooks-Howell Home in Asheville, NC where retired deaconess residents gave us a tour.
- ◆ On the way home, we visited the Scarritt-Bennett Center in Nashville, Tennessee, which opened in 1988 as a non-profit educational retreat and conference center committed to racial equality, cross-cultural understanding, spiritual enrichment and the empowerment of women.
- ◆ Part of our trip included relaxing by eating out, shopping and nature walks. As we traveled, we also enjoyed movies: *Paradise Road*; *12 Years a Slave*; *The Bible Tells Me So*; *42* (about Jackie Robinson and baseball); *Chasing Ice*, and *Trashed*.

Patricia Snyder  
Membership Nurture and  
Outreach Coordinator

***Welcome Cheryl Proctor***

*Albion District President*

Greetings!

It is my pleasure to introduce myself as the newly elected Albion District President. I have been a member of my local UMW unit in Union City for many years and have served on different committees, as Spiritual Growth Coordinator and more recently as President of our unit. I may be a familiar face to some



of you as I worked for the Food Bank of South Central Michigan for 20 years, retiring at the end of 2015. I have one daughter & son-in-law and a new granddaughter born on August 31. I love spending time with them! I am an avid gardener, quilter and reader. I look forward to getting to know the women throughout the West Michigan Conference!

Cheryl Proctor  
Albion District President





## ***Star Child***



During the past three years my favorite Christmas hymn has changed. I would love to print the hymn here in my article but it would take up too much space. In 2013 we sang this hymn and the words just jumped out at me. I have three boys and two grandsons. They are all different. Singing this song and reading the words, I understand that though my boys are different and have followed different paths through life, they are still children of God.

This hymn breaks down all of the different types of children there are in the world. They can be a star child, earth child, street child, beat child, grown child, old child, spared child, spoiled child, love child, Christ Child,

## ***Conference Vice President***

hurt child, used child, sad child, lost child, wise child, faith child or a down to earth child. The words tell me all children are loved by God and *"we are all God's children"*. Christmas is a special time of the year when we remember the birth of a baby Jesus. In His honor, let us remember all of the children young and old and as the hymn ends, *"This year, this year, let the day arrive when Christmas comes to everyone, everyone alive."*

Please read or sing this hymn and add it to your favorites list. It has a very haunting melody and I hope it will become one of your favorites. My wish for you is to have a Christ centered Christmas and pray for *"Peace on Earth."*

Shirley Chappell  
Vice President

## ***From Our Spiritual Growth Coordinator***

The Advent season has begun. Let us remember the reason for this season of waiting. There are many ways to celebrate the season. Most churches light Advent candles during the four Sundays prior to Christmas and on Christmas Eve.

The first candle symbolizes ANTICIPATION. We look forward to the coming of Jesus Christ. The candle for the second week symbolizes HOPE. Because of Jesus, we may look to the future with confidence. On the following Sunday we light the third candle which symbolizes JOY. When purple candles are used in the Advent wreath, the candle for this day is pink. This pink candle represents the great peace and

happiness that comes upon us when the joy of the Lord is ours. On the fourth Sunday we light four candles. The fourth candle symbolize PURITY. Advent promises that the gift of Jesus will bring us a life of holiness. The last candle—lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day—is the Christ candle. This candle symbolizes Christ the Lord coming into the world. The waiting of Advent is now complete. God is with us. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a blessed New year.



Simmie Proctor  
Spiritual Growth Coordinator



***From Our Conference Treasurer***

At Conference Annual \$1,129 was collected in our offering. We designated 1/2 of the offering to UMCH Maintenance and 1/2 to the UMW Women’s Carbon Fund. A question was raised about this Carbon Fund and I wanted to answer that question more thoroughly here – after researching on the UMW website.



At Mission u, many of us had the opportunity to study Climate Justice and learned that climate change does not affect everyone equally. The poorest people around the globe suffer the most from the increasing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and 70% of the world’s poor are women and children. Women around the world work at a grass-roots level to improve life for their families and communities, as they assume responsibility for their family’s basic needs of water and food. Our giving to the UMW Women’s Carbon

Fund supports:

1. Women led projects that lower CO2 emissions that contribute to climate change;
2. Women led projects that help women, families and communities whose lives have been affected by climate change adapt to new conditions; and
3. Climate and energy advocacy initiatives led by women for women – enabling solutions that bring about greater equity, along with sustainability.

If you want to read more and use the on-line Carbon Footprint Calculator, go to: [www/unitedmethodistwomen.org/climate-justice/carbon-fund](http://www/unitedmethodistwomen.org/climate-justice/carbon-fund).

Remember, if you have a Treasurer or “Where the Money Goes” question that you would like answered, please get in touch with me at [juliapr@charter.net](mailto:juliapr@charter.net), or 989-576-0675, or at 4114 Sanctuary Drive, Alma, MI 48801, and look for your question answered in a future edition of Highlights!

Julia Paradine Rice  
Conference UMW Treasurer

***From our Presidents***

*Continued from Page 1*

I do believe that God has a plan for each of us. I guess He decided that now that I am no longer tied down 7/24 running a bed and breakfast I am able to be “tied down” *running* United Methodist Women in West Michigan Conference! I have been accused of being “bossy.” (Imagine that!!)

That is NOT how I plan to fulfill my position. I am also a firm believer in teamwork

and WE ALL are a team! I look forward to working with all of you and helping to move our Conference into a new place these next few years.

Blessings now and through  
this holiday season,

Linda Darrow  
President

## *How Important is that Calendar?*

Have you bought your 2017 calendar? I brought two calendars home from the dollar store last week. The first thing I did was grab a red pen and fill in all the family birthdays (and ages). That way each month I can see at a glance what birthday cards I need to have. Next, I pick another pen and begin writing in all the Kalamazoo District team meetings and Event dates. That way I don't plan an appointment or get together on these important days. There is also the Conference dates to plug into the calendar. Now I need to add my local Unit dates. It will be a busy year, but this way I'll be in the know each time I turn to a new month.

The Kalamazoo District team had a very successful planning session. I have a great

team of gals! The Short Study Event was eliminated for 2017 with the Mission studies to be incorporated into the other four Events, and Spiritual Growth Retreat is an overnight at Crystal Springs.

Get your 2017 calendar and fill in all the important dates in the upcoming year. You won't want to miss any one of them.

Cindy Thiele  
Kalamazoo District Pres.



## Save the Date

**United Methodist Women  
Assembly 2018**

**MAY 18, 19, 20, 2018,  
Columbus, Ohio**

Watch for information coming soon!  
[www.unitedmethodistwomen.org](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org)

## Advocacy priorities for 2017-2020:

**United Methodist Women:  
Putting faith, hope, and love into  
action for women, children, and  
youth around the world!**

- Maternal and child health
- Climate justice
- Ending criminalization of communities of color and mass incarceration, and
- Economic inequality



## *Who will we become and what will we do in the coming year?*

*From Our Social Action Coordinator*



These verses, Joel 1:1-2:22, I Timothy 3:1-15, might sound familiar because our UMW Prayer calendar asked us to read them October 20-23. God's word jump out at us as our **guide for social action**. Everything we do, other than our private personal prayers, is our social action. Even our private personal prayers may be classified as social action if we are interceding on behalf of others prayers. Because we are still alive, God is gifting us with involvement in social actions.

The above Joel passage tells of a locust invasion. Verse 12 ends with "The people's joy has withered away. Mourn, despair, wail, grieve are calls to the people to lament their social circumstances. God declares what they are to do in Joel 2:12-14. Verse 13 states, "Rend heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love..."

The Joel passage indicates that God took pity on his people. He told them he was sending enough to satisfy them fully. The same compassion and pity came to us when God, in Jesus, came to be our enough! Our enough includes indwelling God, the Holy Spirit.

In the 2 Timothy portion of the reading,

Paul was letting young Timothy know what kind of people would be in his social circle, even his church social circle. Paul warned Timothy in verse 5, to "*have nothing to do with such people* (people denying God's power.)" Paul alerts Timothy, and us, verse 12, "in fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Then Paul goes on to teach Timothy, in verses 13-17, something we as United Methodist Women know. *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, So that all God's people (all UMW women) **may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.***

We are equipped to live in Christ in victorious vitality. Our joy has not withered on the vine as in the Joel passage; we have Jesus-Joy and vitality in spite of social circumstances. Through our hearts, souls, minds, hands feet, God is working everything out for all good. We can "lay hold on the raw materials of human living-justice and injustice, pleasure and pain, compliment and criticism- and take them up into the purposes of our lives and transmute them into character and usefulness"(Abundant Living p285, E Stanley Jones).

Equipped with victorious vitality, **we become the servant of the sorrows of others** in their social needs.

Julia Chance, managing editor of *Response Magazine*, posted an article on 10-12-2016 about the UMW Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors. The article indicates that



Harriett Jane Olson, general secretary and CEO of United Methodist Women identified the focus as follows.

*“United Methodist Women mission priorities for the quadrennium are:*

- ♦ *Climate Justice*
- ♦ *Economic Inequality*
- ♦ *Maternal and Child Health, and*
- ♦ *Criminalization of Communities of Color and Mass Incarceration*

*Ms Olson went on talk about our identity, “We are rooted in who God is and who we are in Jesus Christ. . . . We are also rooted in the United Methodist Church and the broader Wesleyan family, emphasizing grace . . . and showing our love for God in our service and advocacy in the world,” she said. “We have a renewed resolve to make certain that our identity is clearly visible in all of our work.”*

*Ms. Olson said spiritual growth, transformative education and leadership development are intentional parts of United Methodist Women that lead to compassionate service and passionate advocacy. “This is the strength of our movement,” she said.”*

In this next year, let’s be sure spiritual growth, transformative education and leadership development are a part of our creative fellowships. Each member will then be equipped to answer the SOCIAL ACTION call for compassionate service and passionate advocacy.

Randie Clawson



**Harriett Jane Olson**  
**CEO of United Methodist Women Inc.**

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*Ms. Olson said spiritual growth, transformative education and leadership development are intentional parts of United Methodist Women that lead to compassionate service and passionate advocacy. “This is the strength of our movement.”*

## Update United Methodist Community House

United Methodist Women (UMW) throughout Michigan Area Conference have been putting faith, hope, and love into action with urban women, children, youth, and seniors at United Methodist Community House (UMCH) in Grand Rapids, MI since 1902. MI Area UMW owns the property and actively raises funds through membership giving and local church projects to be good stewards of this National Mission Institution (NMI); the only NMI in Michigan.

The ongoing campaign to repair the "house" is called "Special Maintenance Fund Program". It is with grateful hearts that generous giving to this program will result in many completed projects by year end totaling **\$66,106.70!**

Projects are added to the list for safety,



program accreditation, and/or critical repair. This list included two large projects. One, the upgraded heating and cooling system, will be finished soon. One huge and several small projects remain. The job of repairing the rotted structure under the front canopy of the UMCH will be extensive. The approximate total of the remaining projects is **\$93,975.**

For further information, please contact either Suzanne Hewitt at [\(616\)361-9565](tel:(616)361-9565), [suzmckhew@att.net](mailto:suzmckhew@att.net) or

Jenny Kroeze at [\(231\)924-4814](tel:(231)924-4814), [jennyK48g@gmail.com](mailto:jennyK48g@gmail.com).

## National UMW Membership Log

Members of United Methodist Women are invited to complete the new membership log on our website:

[www.unitedmethodistwomen.org](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org).

By logging in member information, emails will be sent about Assembly, Calls to Action, events and opportunities.

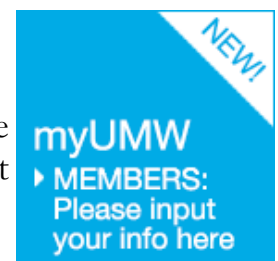
When finished you will be able to print a personalized membership card.

United Methodist Women is a membership organization dedicated to mission with women, children and youth. All mission-

minded women within and beyond The United Methodist Church are welcome. We are an open, Christian organization with ecumenical ties and connections around the world.

United Methodist Women will never share your contact information without your permission.

Look for this tab on the United Methodist Women's website.



## *From Our Membership Nurture and Outreach Coordinator*

This past weekend, I did a craft show with my sister in the Heartland District. It was not a UMW event, but even so we met ladies from Blanchard UMC and Riverdale's Lincoln Road UMC. As United Methodist Women we shared our missions, as well as our crafts and our families. This was one way we can live out our purpose of participating in a supportive community, being involved in mission and growing as whole persons in Jesus Christ. Do you need more ideas?



Try some of these:

- ◆ Begin *Movie Nights* for all the ladies of your church to share the movies I listed above.
- ◆ Develop *Family Movie Nights* with a youth focus. (Not all the movies I listed above are appropriate for the young)
- ◆ Initiate a *Christmas Stockings Project* for needy children.
- ◆ Launch a *Greeting Card Ministry*
- ◆ Start a *Secret Sister Project* or a *Naomi-Ruth Group* to encourage and bless women, who could use a "tender touch" due to difficult circumstances happening in their lives.

Patricia (Patty) Snyder,  
MNO

515-321-1301



United Methodist Women is celebrating its 150th anniversary in

2019 by strengthening and passing on its mission inheritance with the Legacy Fund.

The forward-looking permanent endowment will provide a firm foundation for generations of United Methodist Women to come as members engage in mission with the women, children and youth of their day.

Consider commemorating the year United Methodist Women foremothers first organized for mission, 1869, with gifts in increments of 1869 - \$18.69, \$186.90, \$1,869, etc. Or you may want to honor United Methodist

Women's 150 years of service with gifts in increments of 150 - \$15, \$150, \$1,500, etc.

You are also invited to name the Legacy Fund in your will or as a beneficiary of an insurance policy or pension.

Give to the **LEGACY FUND**

SAVE-THE-DATE: MARCH 23

Online at:

[www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/legacyfund](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/legacyfund)

By phone: [800/278.7771](tel:8002787771)

(8 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST, M-F)

Text Legacy150 to 41444 on your mobile device

By check to:

Office of the Treasurer  
United Methodist Women  
475 Riverside Drive  
New York, NY 10115

*Please mention "Legacy Fund" in the memo line.*

West Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church

[www.michiganumc.org](http://www.michiganumc.org) (Ministries-UMW)

## United Methodist Women

61470 County Road 657, Lawton, MI 49065



United  
Methodist  
Women  
FAITH · HOPE · LOVE IN ACTION

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## Inside This Issue

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**HIGHLIGHTS**-- the official Newsletter for West Michigan Conference United Methodist Women; Is published quarterly: Dec., Mar., June, Sept.

Submissions requested by the 5th of each previous month to:  
Editor: Dorie Litchfield, [creator.dorie@gmail.com](mailto:creator.dorie@gmail.com)  
OR 61470 County Road 657, Lawton, MI 49065

## 2017 Calendar of Events

January 7	Lansing District Epiphany Celebration	East Lansing University UMC
January 14	Albion District Epiphany Celebration	Marshall UMC
February 11	Hartland District Valentine Tea	Ashley UMC
March 11	Grand Rapids District Spring Fling	Cedar Springs UMC
March 23	Annual Day of Giving for the Legacy Fund	
March 25	Kalamazoo District Spring Fling	Western Michigan Wesley Foundation
April 1	Keep Making Peace	East Lansing University UMC
April 21—22	Grand Traverse Spring Retreat	Lake Louise Retreat Center
April 28—29	Albion District Spiritual Growth Retreat	Wesley Woods
April 28—29	Kalamazoo District Spiritual Growth Retreat	Crystal Springs
May 5 – 6	Grand Rapids/Lansing Districts Spiritual Growth Retreat	DeWitt Retreat Center
May 5—6	Heartland District Spiritual Growth Retreat	Wesley Woods
June 10	Grand Rapids District Mini Mission Day	TBD
June 21	Kalamazoo Mission Day	Hartford UMC
July 13—15	Mission u	Albion College
August 3	Grand Traverse Mission Day	Barnard UMC
September 16	District Annual Grand Traverse	Ludington UMC
September 20	District Annual Lansing	TBD
September 21	District Annual Grand Rapids	Lowell UMC
September 21	Heartland District Annual	New Life UMC
September 23	District Annual Kalamazoo	Sodus Chapel Hill UMC
September 30	District Annual Albion	Three Rivers UMC
October 20	District Officer Training/Conference Team Meeting	Muskegon Central UMC
October 21	UMW Conference Annual	Muskegon Central UMC
October 16-17	Mission u School of the North	Gaylord UMC