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Dear UWFaith Sisters:

Happy New Year! I can't believe it is already 2024, the beginning of my final year as Michigan Conference UWFaith President. What a crazy three years it has been! Global pandemic, learning and using ZOOM, name change from United Methodist Women to United Women in Faith (still difficult to always get right), disaffiliations within our United Methodist denomination...whew!

In my work life I worked in organizations that underwent periods of significant change. In one organization our leadership team adopted the tag line – “infinitely flexible”. It was a light, humorous, catchy phrase that brought a smile...but also reminded us to not hold on to things that are not important for the future of the organization. We needed to be open to CHANGE. We continually re-evaluated processes and procedures against our organizational mission. It shed light on things we were doing because “we always do it that way”. If there is one thing we have learned in the Michigan Conference United Women in Faith over the past few years, it is that we definitely need to be “infinitely flexible” in this changing world.

As the new year begins, I hope you return to focusing on the mission and purpose of United Women in Faith. Remember, we are a community of women whose purpose is to know God, to develop creative supportive fellowship and to support mission to improve the lives of women, children and youth. If your unit finds that you are unable to do something you have always done, hold it up against this mission. Is it something that is still important and fits within that mission? If yes, maybe explore a new way to get the same thing accomplished. If no, let it go.

I know this is not easy! We, your Conference and District Leadership Teams are here to help. Use us as the resource you need to stay in mission, continuing to put your faith, hope and love into action. We love to hear from you, and we love to see you at the District and Conference events we plan. We are in this together, putting our faith, hope and love into action.

Blessings,

Julia Paradine-Rice

President

989-576-0675

jparadinerice@gmail.com

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MEET YOUR NEW VICE PRESIDENT

I am excited to be given the opportunity to serve as Michigan Conference UWFaith Vice President for 2024. I started my UWFaith (UMW) "career" as a local unit officer in Holt, and after moving back to Michigan following my husband's passing while we lived in Florida, Vice President for the Mid-Michigan District and followed that by serving as the last president of the Mid-Michigan District. I have leadership experience having served another tri-level association of legal professionals for more than 15 years, culminating in my election as President of the (then) 10,000+ member national organization. I eagerly join groups for which I have a passion for their goals, purposes, and opportunities for growth as individuals. UWFaith has presented me with opportunities to grow as a Christian first, and as an individual second. I find change challenging as well as invigorating and this organization has certainly offered up numerous challenges over the past few years. In my spare time, I play golf as much as possible; I enjoy reading and I spoil my "boys" (Golden Doodles Benson and Cooper) who are my "children." I look forward to working with the conference leadership team in the coming months and to getting to know more of you around the great state of Michigan. Please feel free to reach out to me if there is anything I can do to assist your District or Unit. Contact me at sharonanddicksmit@gmail.com or by phone or text at 517-648-1333. With God's help we will thrive.

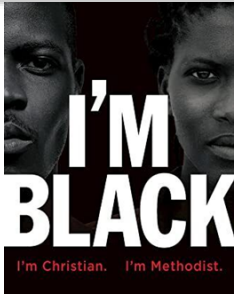
Blessings,
Sharon Smith

PROGRAM RECOURCES - READING PROGRAM

"If you don't like to read, you haven't found the right book." J.K. Rowling

So many books, so little time. I am enjoying the books on the 2024 reading list. I have read many already and am currently reading "I'm Black, I'm Christian, I'm Methodist" and "me and white supremacy". Both are excellent. On February 29, Mighty Networks will host a book talk with two of the authors of "I'm Black, I'm Christian, I'm Methodist". I have registered for this event, and encourage you to register, also. These book talks usually fill up early.

this is a photo holder

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I am hoping that more of you will participate in the Reading Program. Don't like to read, then try audio books or read children's books. There are some approved movies to meet the requirements. Also, the [Faith Talks](#) on the UW in Faith website will count as spiritual growth books. Five books, one in each category, is all you need to read for level I. If you read five last year, then up your goal to level II.

If you haven't already done so, please fill out your [Reading Program Report for 2023](#). Now is the time to fill it out and send it to your district Program Resources Coordinator I filled mine out on Jan 1 and mailed it the next day. The certificates will be issued at your district annual meeting. By doing it now, you won't forget!

In June I am planning to conduct a book discussion with Michigan Area Conference members, using a racial justice book. I am looking for suggestions of 2024 books that you think would generate good discussion. E-mail me your suggestion of a book to be read and discussed, and your interest in participating. This discussion will be by ZOOM, so everyone will be able to participate.

I love to read and talk about the books I have read. I am happy to answer questions about the books and the reading program. Don't hesitate to email me at suttonr1@charter.net or call me at 989-708-9968.

As a final note, please pray for me and the others who are attending the UMC General Conference Charlotte, NC, in May.

Thanks, and God bless you for all you do.

Ruth Sutton, Coordinator of Program Resources

MEET THE NEW MEMBERSHIP NURTURE and OUTREACH COORDINATOR

I am your new Membership Nurture and Outreach officer for 2024. I live in Port Huron, East Winds District. I have been involved in our organization since 1980. Many offices in UMW, UWF, Mission u, local, district and conference. This office involves more outreach with the local units and during a time of a lot of challenges. I am hoping to reach out and involve our membership in the mission of our Lord and Savior by following His example.

Membership: We are all a part of His family and it is up to us as to the extent of our participation.

Nurture: We all know how to nurture, a mother, aunt, friend, teacher, sister, as exemplified by our Lord and Savior.

Outreach: Here in lies the real work. This gives us the opportunity every day to be an example of our Lord. We can be home, or shopping, working, at a meeting, just doing our daily steps in the park. The opportunity, is always there. We just have to be open to see it. Greeting someone, even a stranger, making a phone call, sending a card/note, paying it forward, doing visitation, hospital visit, babysitting, etc. All are opportunities for service. We need to be aware and intentional. "If you do it to the least of these..." You don't have to do a major event for it to be useful and meaningful. Just the smallest jester can change a life. Let us pray daily with joy for all opportunities to be the example of Jesus.

Kay Fuller

Membership Nurture and Outreach

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fullerk04@sbcglobal.net

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Exciting news from the Charter for Racial Justice Committee of the Michigan Conference United Women in Faith! We are currently accepting applications for \$300 mini grants. Local units are being encouraged to creatively develop projects to expand their understanding of racial issues. The format is strictly left up to the Unit. Some past projects have included: attending an inner-city puppet show, visiting local historical museums and presenting a panel discussion on racial experiences among others.

Many more ideas and resources for your unit to consider are available at the following [UWFaith website: UWFaith Racial Justice Opportunities for Local Units](#).

Applications will be accepted until all available funds have been granted. If your application is accepted and a grant is awarded to your unit, we ask that you send a short report to the Charter for Racial Justice Committee upon completion. We would also like a representative of your unit to give a short presentation about your project at the Michigan Conference Annual Celebration in Essexville, Michigan, in late October 2024. (A video submission would also be welcome).

Your submitted application should include the following information:

- Name of Unit, contact person name, address, e-mail and phone number
- Grant amount you are requesting and details on how the funds will be used
- Goals you hope to achieve and estimated number of people participating
- Beginning and ending date of project
- Any additional information to help us understand your plans

Please send your application letter to jparadinerice@gmail.com or by postal mail to Julia Paradine-Rice, 11942 Prairie Edge Street, Schoolcraft, Mi 49087

MESSAGES FROM DISTRICT PRESIDENTS

Greetings from Western Waters District. We are looking forward to this new year and new district area. We will begin the year with a spiritual growth event sometime in April. Location and speaker to be determined. Watch our facebook page for more information. Next up will be Spring Fling on Saturday May 4 at Grand Rapids Community House. We will explore the new and old areas of Community House. Also, have a chance for exploring ideas to share with others. Keep watch we have other ideas coming up.

Jean Sherman
Western Waters District President

We want to wish the United Women in Faith a very Happy New Year, 2024.

Central Bay District United Women in Faith are very happy that we were able to fill most of the openings for our Leadership Team. We are still in need of a Vice President, Chair of Nominations, and openings for Committee on Nominations. We have a Great Leadership Team, and we are working together to make sure everything is getting done. Have assigned the Team C-Zone Partners to keep the Local Units informed and up to date on events that we are having and help them in any way they may need.

We are having our Spiritual Enrichment Brunch on February 10, 2024, at St. Luke's UMC in Essexville, Michigan. The Speaker is Rev. Anita Hahn, see will be speaking on "Beginning our Journey to Draw Closer to God". April 26-27 is the Central Bay District United Women in Faith Spiritual Life Retreat at "The Springs", in Gladwin, Michigan. The speaker will be Jodi Pratt with a message on "Spiritual Gifts with a touch of Peru".

For more information on our two upcoming events see these two links:

The Spiritual Brunch: [CBDBRUNCHFLYER2024.pdf \(umwmichiganconference.org\)](#)

The Spiritual Retreat: [Saginaw Bay District United Methodist Women \(umwmichiganconference.org\)](#)

Blessings,
Doris Simons Co-President
Central Bay District

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Caroline Diaz Co-President
Central Bay District
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(989)450-1735

SAVE THE DATE

Michigan Conference United Women in Faith
6th Annual Celebration
Saturday, October 26, 2024



BOLDLY Moving Forward

The Keynote speaker on Saturday will be Reverend, Dr. John E. Harnish, author of "30 Days with E. Stanley Jones", a book included in the 2024 United Women on Faith Reading Program.

On Friday, October 25 at the Counterpart Training, Faustinia Loper will be leading a workshop on Implicit Bias on Friday.

Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? Isaiah 43:18-19 [ESV]

St. Luke's United Methodist Church, 206 Scheurmann Street. Essexville, MI 48732

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Mission u 2024



United
Women
in Faith

Join us at **Mission u** as we explore what it means to draw closer to God and one another.

Jesus told his followers the kin-dom was among them (Luke 17:21). What does that mean? Who does Jesus say will inherit the kin-dom? How do we transform ourselves and our communities in ways that bring us closer to the kin-dom and the kin-dom closer to us? Dive into these questions and more at Mission u 2024 as we examine Scripture together and join in worship, fellowship, and action.

Adult — *Welcome Home* by Neomi Fletcher

The adult curriculum uses the image of home to explore how living in close proximity to the kin-dom is like making a home with God. Participants are invited to develop practices for building healthy, welcoming communities as a result of being anchored in the abiding love of God.

Youth — *Cultivating Symbiosis: The Nature of God's Kin-dom* by Nica Sy
In Creation, we see the power of symbiosis, or interdependent relationship. The youth curriculum explores the idea of symbiosis between our relationships with one another and our relationship with God. By drawing closer to one another and our world, we draw closer to the kin-dom.

Children — *Me in the Kin-dom* by Kathy Cook

The children's curriculum uses the Lord's Prayer as a lens to help us see that we are all members of the family of God. Children will begin to understand that the kin-dom is living with Christ and one another on earth as in heaven.

Join us!

dates/times:

July 18-20, 2024 **MI** Pleasant, MI

Come learn together for the transformation of the world!

Mission u 2024 offers three exciting curricula on this theme: Order your copy here: uwfaithresources.org

More info:

Email connieswinger@att.net

web [Mission u | United Women in Faith \(uwfaith.org\)](http://Mission u | United Women in Faith (uwfaith.org))

[Day of Giving 2024](#)

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Faithfully Forward

uwfaith.org/dayofgiving



United Women in Faith



Save the Date: March 23, 2024

Faithfully Forward Join United Women in Faith as we step faithfully forward, uniting hearts and hands to create a brighter, more compassionate tomorrow for women, children, and youth. Give to The Legacy Endowment Fund on the Day of Giving, March 23.

WAYS TO GIVE

- **Online at:** uwfaith.org/dayofgiving
- **By phone:** 800-278-7771 (8 am - 5 pm EST, Mon. - Fri.)
- **Text:** "FUTURE" to 20503



• **By check to:**
 United Women in Faith, Attn: Legacy
 777 United Nations Plaza, 11th Floor
 Church Center for the United Nations
 New York, NY 10017

Write "Day of Giving" in the memo section.

Together we are building our Legacy!



United Women in Faith

The Legacy Endowment Fund is a permanent investment that supports the work and the future of United Women in Faith.



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