



INFORMER

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PURPOSE OF UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be 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.



Virginia Conference United Methodist Women: Still Living Into Our Purpose"

A Message to our UMW Sisters



Greetings to each of you! Our United Methodist Women's plans, meetings, events, etc. have changed with the COVID-19 pandemic. What has not changed is our work in mission for women, children, and youth all over the world. Some of our advocacy focuses have been touched deeply by the coronavirus such as domestic violence, health for women and children, and economic inequality to name a few. Sisters, even though we are not able to be together at this time physically, there are ways to still connect and do the best we can to continue our work safely. Your Virginia Conference Mission Team met via zoom a few weeks ago and it was a team decision to continue with *Living into Our Purpose (LIOP)* and to give recognitions rather than awards at our Annual Meeting. *Living into Our Purpose* is our "blueprint" for our work. It helps keep us on the path of our foremothers, our purpose and our mission as United Methodist Women. PLEASE CONTINUE READING THIS COMMUNICATION FOR INFORMATION FROM MEMBERS OF THE MISSION TEAM REGARDING "LIVING INTO OUR PURPOSE."

Mary Jane Rawley, President

It is an unsettling reality that COVID-19 has seriously impacted our organizational life and interfered with aspects of our program, including "*Living Into Our Purpose*," report period September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020. All has not been lost as many units were able to work on *LIOP* goals for the six months (September to February) prior to the closing of our churches.

It is a time of learning new technology, relying on old fashioned communication and "thinking outside the box." We all need encouragement to move ahead. So, we thought it might be helpful to focus attention on what can be done during the remaining summer months and even beyond. We will do this by referencing the *LIOP* template and including ideas that we the Mission Team would like to share with you. (*LIOP* form attached) So here goes:

1. Purpose (Mission Giving)

Suggestions: Specifically provided by Linda Borrer, Conference Treasurer

1a. "Make and Meet a Pledge to Mission Giving."

Even though this year is a very difficult time, try to be vigilant in encouraging your units/ individuals to send in their pledge money so that our UMW Mission Projects can remain open for women, children and youth. This can be done by a telephone call or note to your members which would serve two purposes: (1) staying connected to your members and checking on them; (2) asking if they need anything and then a gentle reminder that pledge money, if at all possible, is still being collected.

1c. "Increase the local organization's Pledge to Mission this year."

There is no set limit on the amount as it could be anything from \$1 on up.

1d. "Qualify as a Five-or-Six Star Organization by contributing to five or six Channels of Mission Giving." This is for the period Sep 1, 2019 – Aug 31, 2020

This is simple to do as any amount paid on your pledge during the year would qualify a unit, as well as \$5 for a Gift in Memory or Gift to Mission Card. One Special Mission Recognition at \$40 and any amount for the World Thank Offering and Candle Burning makes your unit a

six-star organization.

1e. “Have one (1) member become a Rainbow Giver.” This must be turned in to your District Treasurer by early August. Only one (1) member at \$60 is a part of the Living Into Our Purpose and qualifies your unit as a five-star organization.

1f. “Participate in the United Methodist Women Legacy Fund”.

Any amount from an individual(s) earns you a point and more importantly insures the future of United Methodist Women.

All of the above can be accomplished by sending your check through your unit treasurer as the first step. She then sends it to the District Treasurer who compiles and forwards it onto the Conference Treasurer. This can be done from your favorite chair at home or from your front porch.



JUST DO THE VERY BEST YOU CAN

2. KNOW God (FAITH)

2a. “Encourage the practice of Spiritual Disciplines (i.e. scripture, prayer, fasting).”

Suggestion: Begin a covenant group among the members; Members agree to privately read devotionals, scripture, the Upper Room etc. and meditate on the source for the week(s). Members connect regularly by conference calls, round robin emailing or Zoom. Note: Devotionals written by UMW Conference officers are posted on-line every Monday. Email Mary Jane Rawley to be placed on the email list.

3. EXPERIENCE FREEDOM AS WHOLE PERSONS (HOPE)

3b. “Present a Program or initiate a project based on District or Conference Social Action Priority.” (Reminder: The Conference Priorities for 2016-2020 are Economic Inequality, Climate Justice, Criminalization of Communities of Color; Maternal and Child Health)

Suggestions:

1. Have a Social Action Study using Zoom: For example, one unit has been doing a Climate Justice Study weekly on Zoom. Could your unit have a study addressing one of the Social Action Priorities and do it on Zoom?

2. Have a Program on one of the priorities during a Zoom meeting, using material from response, guest speakers; relevant book reports(s) from Reading Program; Also, view Faith Talks Podcasts individually at home and discuss at a zoom meeting. The Faith Talks Podcasts are monthly conversations with UMW members exploring themes, many with spiritual growth content, but also with topics relating to our priorities such as Paid Family Leave, Creation Care, Education Inequality. Back episodes are available. Find information on unitedmethodistwomen.org.

3f ”Have at least one (1) member sign up to receive Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy alerts (<http://www.virginiafaithcenter.org>) and use ideas to advocate for justice.”

Suggestion: One volunteer can receive the alerts from the Virginia interfaith Center for Public Policy and share with members by way of letter or email, and the members can study the information and determine whether to advocate for justice while at home, through providing signatures, letter writing etc. Also, Social Action Coordinator, Karen McElfish, frequently sends out emails with information and requests for advocacy.

4. DEVELOP A CREATIVE/SUPPORTIVE FELLOWSHIP

4e. “Write to at least five mission workers listed in Prayer Calendar.”

4g. “Submit names of deceased members to District MN & O Coordinator by Aug. 31.”

Suggestions: The two items above can be easily accomplished while at home.



5. EXPAND CONCEPTS OF MISSION

5c. “Select a Mission Institution or Project which is supported by funds from the United Methodist Women National Office or the Ministry Grants of Virginia.”

Suggestion: Conduct a poll on-line if consensus is required for allocation of funds.

Wesley Community Service Center, the only National Institution in Va., continues to need our support, especially at this time of COVID-19. Wesley is currently holding a fundraiser raffle, May 10-June 20 to raise funds for much needed repairs. For information: goggle Wesley Community Services Center or link: thewesleycenter.ourraffle.org.

5d. Have or participate in at least one current mission study during the year.

Suggestion: This year we won't have Mission Encounter, but National Office has informed us that there will be an adaptation of one of the studies, “Finding Peace in an Anxious World.” The study guide has been adapted to be used easily either individually or in virtual small groups. Study leader trainers have also worked to create a series of companion videos to enhance the study. Available very soon.

A final thought: Let us remember to stay connected with our UMW sisters who may not be moving as quickly in adapting to technological advancements. Keeping them invested as valued members is essential; We cannot afford to lose them. The old -fashioned methods, calling or writing a note, still work.

Looking to the Future: We anticipate that changes will be made to the *LIOP* template for 2020-21 to include more realistic and attainable goals. We look forward to Annual Meeting and a time of recognizing you for your accomplishments. We pray that all will stay connected, encouraged, safe and healthy.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO OUR PURPOSE. JUST DO THE VERY BEST YOU CAN!

Peace and blessings,
Your Sisters of the Virginia Conference UMW Mission Team,
Mary Jane Rawley, President



Betsy Daughtrey President



After talking to the Fairfield UMW, we feel that it is too soon to meet for our Day Apart. I am hoping we will be able to meet at some point this year. I hope all of you are staying safe and are healthy. Thank God, my family and I have been very well. For myself, I have taken this time to work on home and garden projects that I had planned when I retired four years ago. My son, Mark, planted strawberries last year and we have had lots of fresh berries for several weeks now. I have missed my usual routine of our “Days for Girls” group (that meets at Central UMC), as well as the Community Table, monthly UMW unit meetings, and Camp Rainbow.

From the RESPONSE article THE CONCERT OF MISSION by Christi Campos she writes “Sometimes I hear ladies say we are getting too involved with social issues, with political issues. Social issues, social justice is a part of our Methodist heritage since the days of Wesley and certainly isn’t a new idea for United Methodist Women. The social condition for females in India were at the very heart of our beginning.” One of the first concepts of the UMW was how we worked with those on the margins. It was our foremothers who wrote and enacted the “Charter for Racial Justice”, long before the Methodist church. Our organization was active in the outlawing of lynching.

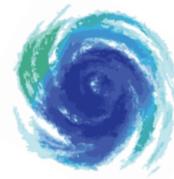
It was through the UMW that I learned about the injustice in the prison system, first in an article in the Response magazine about 8 or 9 years ago, and then educating myself with books like DEAR WHITE AMERICA, THE NEW JIM CROW, and MISS BRENDA AND THE LOVELADY’S to name a few. The criminalization of communities of color has been one of our UMW national and conference priorities for 2018-2020, focusing on the school-to-prison pipeline. Our Staunton District UMW supports Kingsway Prison and Family Outreach.

Let us continue to be actively involved in social justice, as God has required of you : “ But to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”: Micah 6:8 and “ Thus says the Lord of hosts: Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother.” Zechariah 7: 9-10.

Blessings,
Betsy Daughtrey
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Sandy Anderson Vice-President



Greetings United Methodist Women in Christ!

As I sit at my computer thinking about what I could possibly write, it is storming outside. I am reminded that we all have been facing several storms since our February newsletter. Who would have thought as we edited and mailed out that publication, a pandemic would march across the globe and our country, affecting millions and killing over 100,000 in the United States alone? Along with it came vast unemployment, financial losses in our 401ks, hunger and debt, overwhelming grief and sickness, family stress with homeschooling and an increase in domestic violence. And all this, on top of the everyday storms we weather in our lives. All of us, as we sheltered at home, had to cancel many plans. I, for one, had visits from my daughter, who lives in Northern Virginia, canceled, and we cancelled our visits to her. My husband and I also called off a trip to Pennsylvania and on to Niagara Falls. I had tickets to see the Rolling Stones on July 1! Proms, band trips, graduations, and weddings were canceled or postponed. And of course, the Staunton District UMW events were canceled and United Methodist churches were unable to hold services. My church has even found it necessary to cancel our annual Homecoming. Life, it seems, has just been put on hold as we ride out this storm and do all we can to keep everyone safe. Our prayers go out to all who have been affected by this deadly virus in any way.

Our church has a wonderful minister who kept us all connected with video messages and recorded prayer tree calls. Our UMW kept in touch with each other and our friends and families through phone calls and cards. Some of us volunteered at the local food pantry and delivered food and other items to those in need. I encourage each of you to continue reaching out to your friends, family and neighbors and checking up on them, especially those who live alone or have no way to get groceries, etc. I think the one good thing that has come out of all this, has been more time with family, and corresponding and communicating with long lost friends. Social distancing does not mean social disconnection; help us be the community that we seek. I knew I missed church, but I didn't know how much until we held our first drive-in service last Sunday. What a joy to hear an uplifting message from our pastor while we praised the Lord with songs and prayers of thanksgiving. We are the church - not the building.

Then, just as it seemed we were seeing the light and starting to come out of those storms that wreaked havoc by the coronavirus, another one hit reminding us of the racial and social injustices we still experience in our country. A few days ago, the United Methodist Women organization shared on Facebook, the following, which is a prayer for today (and every day) from "Finding Peace in an Anxious World" leader's guide:

"Eternal God, grant us peace in this anxious world. May we trust in you with all of our hearts, and may you bring us insight and refreshment. Help us to practice Christian acceptance of the things we cannot change, and give us the courage to take action when we are called to act. Your ways are ways of righteousness, justice, and equity. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

All future in-person gatherings of the Staunton District UMW are on hold at this time. It is our prayer that we will be able to host the Annual Meeting and Advent Breakfast. As we know more, we will keep you informed. Please stay safe and if there is anything I may do for you or your unit, feel free to contact me.

Yours in Christ,

Sandy Anderson
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**Thora Rippens
Treasurer**



FAITH

Hebrews 11:1 definition: "Now **faith** is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen".

Thanks to each of the units and the individuals who have made donations to support missions through the United Methodist Women. What JOY there will be when, in Christ's good time, you will see just how your gifts touched the lives of others and how the act of giving has enriched your life as well.

God calls us to support missions even when the world tells us to practice social distancing. Below is a comparison of undesignated giving; the number of units who submitted \$2 per member for Administrative and Membership Development expenses and the amount designated for the Legacy Fund.

	2019	2020
Pledge	\$4,151.30	\$3,755.53
Special Mission Recognition Pins	\$40.00	0.00
Gift to Missions	\$5.00	\$1,149.00
Gift in Memory	\$10.00	\$10.00
World Thank	\$314.00	\$361.45
Candle Burning	\$0.00	\$50.00
Total Undesignated Giving 1 st Qtr*	\$4,520.30	\$5,325.98
# of Units that donated 1 st Qtr*	17	20
# of Units that paid A&MD	10	9
Legacy Fund	\$215.00	\$75.00



*1st Quarter covers the period from December 11 of one year to March 10 of the next year.

Step out in faith!



Thora Rippens
Treasurer
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Betty Brossy Secretary

In this time of fear, unrest, and upheaval, I have rediscovered Mahatma Gandhi's positive and challenging view of the world. I think we can all use a bit of his wisdom. I offer it now to you.

Mahatma Gandhi's "10 Rules for Changing the World"

1. **Change Yourself** – "You must be the change you want to see in the world."
2. **You are in Control** (I would add with God's Help) – "Nobody can hurt me without my permission."
3. **Forgive and Let It Go** – "An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind."
4. **Without Action You Aren't Going Anywhere** – "An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of preaching."
5. **Take Care of This Moment** – "I do not want to foresee the future. I am concerned with taking care of the present. God has given me no control over the moment following."
6. **Everyone Is Human** – "It is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err."
7. **Persist** – "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."
8. **See the Good In People And Help Them** – "Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow-men."
9. **Be Congruent, Be Authentic, Be Your True Self** – "Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony."
10. **Continue to Grow and Evolve** – "Constant development is the law of life, and a man who always tries to maintain his dogmas in order to appear consistent drives himself into a false position."

May God bless you all. Stay safe and stay calm and carry on!

Betty Brossy
Secretary
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Anna Zapotoczny
Secretary of Program Resources
(Reading Program)

This certainly has been a different kind of year, but with our prayers, love, and support for one another, we will make it through! Praise God that we can continue to read!

BOOK KITS:

If your unit can use additional Reading Program books, please let me know. I can provide a "Book Kit" with 5 books -- one book in each Reading Program category.

Even if you got a "Book Kit" in December but can use an additional one now, you qualify!

PUBLIC LIBRARY READING PROGRAM BOOKS:

Some of the libraries are beginning to loan books again.

*Contact me if you need a copy of the LIST OF READING PROGRAM BOOKS
AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC LIBRARY.*

Some e-book Reading Program Books are also available through the various public libraries. These e-books are indicated as such on the Reading Program Library Lists.

"JUST MERCY" FILM: If you have seen the movie "Just Mercy," you can count that as having read the book under the Social Action category. It counts as a Bonus Book (counts as 2 books in that category.)

A REMINDER: As far as I know, All Reading for the 2020 Reading Program must be completed by August 31. Your reading beginning September 1 will count toward the 2021 Reading Program. If I receive notification of a change in that date, I'll let you know.

HAPPY READING! GOD BLESS EACH OF YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES!

IN CHRIST,
Anna Zapotoczny
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or 540-943-1474





Rita Watkins Spiritual Growth

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Months have passed since we have been able to be in church, have mission group meetings or even visit with one another. My mind flits from one Bible story to another. I think of Adam and Even cast out of the Garden of Eden, away from the comforting presence of God. I think of the Israelites wandering in the wilderness for 40 years seeking the promised land. Things were dire but Moses prayed and God sent manna and fresh water (although at a great cost to Moses). As parents we tell our children that actions have reactions and sometimes consequences. Moses saw the promised land but never set foot in it for not truly believing God would provide water. All through the history of mankind we can read of people dealing with challenging issues. And what does God want us to do? Pray and obey. God is with us today as we experience times that none of us have had to face before.

As always since time began God is with us. He promises if we seek Him and love Him, He will not abandon us. He sent His only Son to save us from our sins. Doesn't that show us that He will not desert us? We modern day Christians are no different from all the wandering people of the past. We need to remember our God is a God of love. He has a plan for each of us and He will bring us through this current crisis.

God is good all the time! All the time God is good!

Blessings,

Rita Watkins
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Joyce Emerson Mission Education & Interpretation



Greetings UMW Sisters in Christ

The last few months have been none that we have experienced before, and things will change even though some of us are not ready for that. With these changes we must as Christians be ready to adapt and help others along this difficult path. I have missed my UMW friends and hope you have been well. I look forward to when we can gather and praise the Lord for we have so much to be thankful for. Please social distance and wear your mask, for yourself as well as for other brothers and sisters. Extra prayers for our world, USA and our churches.

Wanted to share with you that E&I (taken from Link) was to have a time of remembrance at Mission Encounter for two persons special to our Virginia Conference United Methodist Women. Since we are not having Mission Encounter, in case some of you may not have known them, here is a brief outline of their life:



REVEREND WALTER WHITEHURST, retired Virginia Conference pastor and retired GBGM Missionary, known to all as "Walt," passed away on January 4, 2020. In remembering Walt, one's thoughts naturally include the mentioning of his wife Dr. Betty Whitehurst, who served as our UMW Conference President, 2005-2006. Walt and Betty were partners in ministry, especially as missionaries in Chile and in leading the Southeastern Jurisdiction United Methodist Volunteers in Mission Office and serving as Consultants for Individual Volunteers with the General Board of Global Ministries. Walt and Betty have been a strong, supportive presence in the work of the Virginia Conference United Methodist Women at all levels, offering their experience and passion for mission as resource persons and study leaders. Brenda NeSmith had the personal pleasure of being a member of a Volunteer in Mission Team to Russia, led by Walt in the early 1990's, a period following Perestroika and the fall of Communism in the Soviet Union. The team experience was unforgettable as Walt modeled and led us in relating to our new Russian acquaintances with sensitivity and a spirit of reconciliation. During the trip, Walt led the team in singing the South African hymn, "Send Me, Lord". Also, Walt shared his special talents in storytelling, telling jokes and playing his ukulele, all of which are a part of the cherished memory by those who knew him.

REVEREND MICHAEL DAVIS, a Virginia Conference pastor, was serving as the Founding Pastor of Journey Missional Faith Community on the Farmville District at the time of his passing on February 11, 2020. Michael, known to all as "Mike," is the husband of Betsey Davis, who is our devoted technical support person for our Conference events. Mike and Betsey, like the Whitehursts, have also been known as a dynamic duo, sharing partnership in ministry. Mike was a professional stamp collector with experience and expertise in collecting, sorting, and selling postage stamps. Many UMW members sent their used stamps to Mike who sold them, yielding a monetary return to our Conference mission fund. United Methodist Women of the Virginia Conference are grateful to Mike for serving as our "stamp man." Praise be to God for these men's service.

I have not heard anything about our Living into Our Purpose forms. I assume you complete as best you can since we have not been able to carry-out some of the requirement during the last 4 months. Hope to have more information later.

Sympathy to our District Superintendent and his family in the loss of his father-in-law. Also, a big thank you to Rev. Dave Rochford, superintendent, for his service to the Staunton District and his loyalty to United Methodist Women, we will miss you. We wish you and your family the best as you leave to shepherd your new church.

Blessings to all, be safe, stay well and help others as you can

Joyce Emerson
E&I Chair

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From Joyce Emerson, E & I Chair:

“Just in from Henry Fork so wanted to share this:

Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.” 1 Peter 5:7

At the beginning of 2020, we were optimistic for a great year. Now, we live in a time of uncertainty. Stores and restaurants are closed. People are staying home without visiting or participating in entertainment outside of the home. Gatherings have virtually stopped. The Henry Fork building is quiet and we are missing our children. We are still hopeful for a summer program, but are unsure of a start date. This is like nothing we have seen before. It is easy to understand why people are discouraged and nervous. There are so many risks at the moment. The unknown is always scary and it's easy to get wrapped up in fear.

But there is a light at the end of the tunnel. A guiding light. God is there. He is in the midst of all the anxiety, uncertainty, and fear. We just have to re-member to lean on Him. He will not leave us. He will not forsake us. He will get us through.

At times when things seem bleak, it is easy to fall into a state of sadness. The hard part is finding the strength and courage to pass our worries to God. We often have trouble letting go, but that is where our faith comes in. Our faith will get us through. Our trust in the Lord will get us through. We will get through this time of uncertainty if we have a little love, patience, prayer, and, above all, faith. I pray that you are all finding peace and leaning on your faith to get you through. I hope everyone is staying well until this storm passes and we can all be together in Christian community again. God bless each and every one of you today, tomorrow, and in the days to come.

Jessica Hunt
Executive Director

