



NORTH EAST DISTRICT
"The Shofar"



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United Women in Faith

Our NEW logo and NEW name



United Women in Faith

We are now United Methodist Women/doing business as United Women In Faith. (UW Faith)

"WHATS IN THIS SHOFAR??"

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"WHAT IS NEXT IN DISTRICT?"

2024 ANNUAL RETREAT
"The PSALM of my Heart"
April 27, 2024 at Kaukauna Peace,
2300 East Wisconsin Avenue,
Kaukauna, WI 54130
Registration form on page 11

**TEAM MEETING SCHEDULE:
(CONTACT US IF ATTENDING MEETING)**

March 2 (Saturday), teleconference

Prepare for Lent and reasons why?

Lent is a season of forty days , which begins on [Ash Wednesday](#) and ends on Holy Saturday. The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry. Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. Today, Christians focus on relationship with God, growing as disciples and extending ourselves, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of ourselves for others. Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter." "Sunday in Lent" rather than "Sunday of Lent" in the naming of these Sundays. On each Lord's Day in Lent, while Lenten fasts continue, the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection. While a day of considerable joy, it might also be a day when the sermon may ask or lament how those who seemed to laud Jesus on Sunday could by Friday morning call for his execution.

This was Palm Sunday, this final Sunday in Lent has been known as Passion/Palm Sunday. Actions recalling the Sunday Jesus entered Jerusalem are limited to an opening procession, while the main part of the service focuses on reading the lengthy story of the final passion (suffering) of Jesus in his betrayal, arrest, trial and execution. A shift from triumph and elation to horror and sorrow happens abruptly within this single service, setting a somber, solemn tone that continues through the rest of the week.

In response to that reality, the Lenten practices of fasting, prayer, and ministry with the poor had evolved into practices of general penitence among the baptized to help strengthen the spiritual lives of lifelong Christians.

The Protestant Reformations of the 16th century added more variety to the observances of Lent. Some traditions observed a day called "Passion Sunday" on the fifth Sunday of Lent, but with readings that focused on Jesus' call to take up the cross and follow him, not his own passion (suffering). Palm Sunday observances might occur on either the Fifth or the Sixth Sunday of Lent. Readings for the first five weeks of Lent would focus on living in the way of Jesus. For the sixth Sunday, the beginning of the week of the most intense preparation, they combined a Palm Sunday processional with the reading of the passion of Jesus from one of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, or Luke). That flow created a greater emphasis on the gospel reading for the entire church into the final and most intense week of preparation, Holy Week.

The same ecumenical scholarship that influenced changes which included Methodists, Anglicans, Lutherans, and Presbyterians among others. Daniel T. Benedict's 1997 book, "[Come to the Waters](#)," provides clear and accessible guidance so United Methodist congregations can use Lent and Holy Week as originally designed.

Prayer: But in the midst of our weakness, we ask that you would be strong on our behalf. Lord, rise within us. Let your Spirit shine out of every broken place we've walked through. Allow your power to be manifested through our weakness so that others will recognize it is You who is at work on our behalf. We ask that you trade the ashes of our lives for the beauty of your Presence. Trade our mourning and grief for the oil of joy and gladness from your Spirit. Trade our despair for hope and praise. We choose to give you thanks today and believe that this season of darkness will fade away. Amen

President's Message

January 2024

(sorry, this is late, I had some personal health issues, much better.)

Welcome to a new year 2024. What a blessing 2023 was for our District.

Unfortunately, we lost eight units, and now we have only eighteen units. This is creating problems, one is our dedicated pledge to conference, \$ 30,000.00, this will be discussed at our meeting January 6th. Do you remember the merger with going to five districts??? We had almost fifty units. Over the years, with Covid, disaffiliations, and age, we have so many units. Now we are waiting for the June UMC decision of going to 4 Districts.

We will discuss our calendar for team calls and our upcoming event on April 27th at Kaukauna Peace. (The registration form is in this issue pg. 12)

We are very fortunate to have in-place our Retreat at Kaukauna Peace and Annual Celebration at Algoma Blvd. Oshkosh. We also have guest speakers in place.

In December, I was able to send twelve units \$90.00 from the Melaleuca Charity Fund. I have received five reports with information about what they used the funds for and some compliments about their gratitude for the gift to help complete their mission projects. Hopefully, this can continue to the units that respond for their use, as I requested in their letter and check.

Hopefully, we can keep our unit count. We will need to reach out and stay connected with each of them and help them if needed. "All to God's Glory." **Jan Stanko, President**

Vice-President January 2024

Life very suddenly has become very basic. A month ago I was sick and eventually made a trip to the hospital emergency facilities. I have been very well taken care of by my husband, medical staff, family, friends, and most of all by the Great Physician. I have been very surprised how sick I was and how fragile life is.

I love the Christmas season and have managed to miss almost all of the scheduled activities including our UWF Cookie Walk. I heard that our church Christmas tree was beautiful and missed the Women's Advent Service and all other events. I am truly back to BASICS. In the hospital for 8 ½ days with a GI bleed, I received six units of blood and was hooked up with fluids the entire time. I had lots of time to talk and listen to God. How much I am thankful for the Greatest Gift of all that we celebrate during the Advent season!

I am not afraid to die. My death and soul are in God's hands. But I didn't feel ready to die. I have always loved to read and love books and printed material. I, also, love to make and keep lists and articles to read and deal with SOMEDAY. Two of my nieces have assured me they will take care of my things. But in my heart of hearts, I know that means give away and throw out. In the hospital I recorded lists of things I should do and finish. My other big lesson to contemplate was "Today is what we have been given." Although my energy level is still in recovery, I am wishing us all a God-directed and productive 2024!!!

Ruth Wiersma, Vice-President

SECRETARY 'tis the season.....

Do we use this for a joyful response or for an excuse.

The house is messy----“tis the season.

I'm exhausted and cranky---'tis the season.

We're over budget---'tis the season.

It's a political event in which we decide to wish people or call the tree----'tis the season.

My painful response is “get over yourself” and enjoy the company of others WITH the messy house, put aside the crankiness and have an inexpensive get together with popcorn and hot chocolate. Enjoy each other for who knows what 2024 will bring. Rejoice that we have a faith to support us and relax in knowing that your true friends accept you for who, what and where you are. Prepare for a new year filled with many possibilities and promises. Embrace them.

Roberta Gale, Secretary

TREASURERS' Report

Greetings to everyone,

I would like to thank all the local units that made their pledges this year. I am hoping that we are at least close to our pledge to Conference. I know it has been a difficult year for many units, none of us are getting any younger.

The one thing that has been on my mind lately is that at the end of 2024 my 6 year term as your treasurer is up. We will be in need of someone to step up and take over this job. So, consider if there is anyone in your unit that may be able to take this on. At some point in 2024 Nominations will be calling. Please give this your consideration.

A final thought for 2023

The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6: 24 - 26

Rogene Moore, NED Treasurer



Happy New Year!!

The Advent Season is a very special time of year for Christians...it is the beginning of understanding just how much God loves us. It is an opportunity for us to grow, to develop, to rethink how we live our lives, to reach out to one another, to support and encourage each other and to cherish the most indescribable gift: Jesus Christ. In our culture, we embrace the New Year as an opportunity for change. Many of us formulate plans, set goals or make resolutions as to what we will be doing differently in the New Year. I have read that most people make plans... but revert back to their old habits within three weeks. That is a lot like sin. We are all sinners. We ask God to forgive us our sins. We strive to do better and to become more like Jesus in our thoughts, with our words and by our actions and deeds. But unlike our resolutions, our loving, forgiving God lets us start anew everyday....not just once a year.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

As you embrace the New Year, remember to give **THANKS** to God for the precious Christmas you received. The gift that helps you to become what you were meant to be: A strong Woman of Faith, who knows she is a sinner, asks for forgiveness, talks to God through pray, shares the good news with others through her words and deeds and most of all loves God.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. Deuteronomy 6:5

Our lives are filled with challenges, trials and suffering but we have something that helps us get through it all....**Matthew 28:20b**

“ And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”



Make your New Year's resolution to become more like Jesus; read and study your bible, pray every day, share the Good News and remember:

Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6

Barbara Mamerow, Spiritual Growth

Program Resources

Books I have recently read are *We Kiss them with Rain*, *Daughter of Cana* and *The Four Winds*. *The Four Winds* is long but I couldn't put it down. I sat up two nights till 1:30 reading. It is history in novel form about the early 30s, the dust bowl and the migrant workers in California. *Daughter of Cana* was a relaxing and reflective book to read. It was interesting to read about what the people around Jesus were possibly feeling and thinking. It also causes you to reflect on your own thoughts and understanding of the events of that time.

We Kiss them with Rain is a story of a young girl growing up in Durban South Africa and the people around her with HIV/AIDS. How she struggled to raise her daughter and keep her safe. Also how little women and girls were valued.

If you enjoy reading the Reading Program has much to offer. Jan sent a 2024 list out to all the units a few months ago and you can go on line and get a list also. Just go to United Women in Faith/ Reading program.

Sandy Klein Program Resources coordinator

EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION

Hello, and Happy 2024! 2023 was a great year and I want to thank everyone who submitted Mission Today Unit forms. It is great to hear from you and to see what you have been doing in your units and circles.

In planning for 2024, make sure to use the current Mission Today Unit form to balance your activities throughout the year. Utilize your leadership team to make sure that they each have accountability for their areas of responsibility. Call on each team member at every meeting to allow them to update your unit on what is happening.

Remember to plan your mission and service projects, too. I will be providing you with forms to tell us what you are planning for 2024. Later in the year, I will ask you to let us know how the project progressed and what was accomplished. Plan for the NE District Annual Celebration that will be hosted by Algoma Boulevard United Methodist Church in Oshkosh on September 21st, 2024. We will plan time for each of you to tell us what you have done in 2024. If you have a project that you can "show" us, that is even better!

Plan your unit activities around the NE District dates, along with the Wisconsin Conference dates. Also, plan some activities that are wonderful to promote our sisterhood, and renew our selves. These are great opportunities to invite the women in your church and community to join you.

I wish each and everyone a great new year!

Sandy Butcher, E & I

SOCIAL ACTION: Climate justice and ending mass criminalization of communities of color will remain the social action focuses for the 2025-28 quadrennium per action taken by The United Women in Faith Board of Directors, which met on October 23. Whenever members think that there's little they can do, remind them of these words from our president, Ainise Isama'u: "Each of us is an essential thread in the fabric of our organization; we are not just leaders; we are advocates of change, and we are the voices that speak."

Climate Justice Focus: Bomb cyclones, polar vortexes, derechos, gray swans, weather whiplash, atmospheric lakes, firenados, heatflation, and flash drought are weather terms we are becoming all too familiar with; why? According to meteorologist for Yale Climate Connections, Jeff Masters, "We're now in a totally new climate. The climate of the 21st century has a lot more heat energy in it" which means wetter hurricanes, hotter heat waves, and more devastating droughts as Kyla Mandel, senior editor at *Time* reports in her article "Bomb Cyclone' and Other Weird Weather Words for Our Climate Change Era".

To help us understand these new weather terms, Mandel, in her article, quotes extreme weather expert Jill Trepanier, associate professor at Louisiana State University: "The climate system is in a state of flux as it adapts to a new equilibrium-that is, having more available heat and having to find ways to move or transport this added energy-and in any system, that's when the 'weird' happens." In short, our planet is warming, and as it warms, extreme weather events like bomb cyclones and derechos are becoming more common.

In a November 2023 article on Science X, Yvaine Ye of the University of Colorado at Boulder writes, "Unrelenting wildfires in Canada and Hawaii. Catastrophic floods in Libya. Sweltering temperatures across the globe. These climate disasters, which once would have happened every decade or longer, all took place in 2023." Are you ready for this to become the new normal?

When interviewed in Ye's article, Pedro DiNezio, associate professor in the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at CU Boulder, says, "Scientists have been predicting climate change is going to happen for decades. Now is the time to act, and we should act in a just, fair, and inclusive way, including everyone on this planet." As United Women in Faith, these are words that we can relate to. Climate Justice is one of the primary focuses of UWF. We recognize that climate change does not affect everyone equally and that the most marginalized are the least responsible for it. As the UWF website states, "Protecting God's creation and those disproportionately affected by global climate change is more than our belief; it is one of our core principles."

Are you following the Just Energy 4 All campaign? What are you doing to reduce your carbon footprint?

Connie Meyer
Social Action

Genesis 8:22 – "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

INFORMATION FROM UNITS:

I enjoyed hearing Martha's history in the Methodist Church in her home country of Mexico. Members of my unit who attended on Saturday commented how much they enjoy networking with other units and reconnecting with members they've seen at Mission u and other events. I agree with them and add that I find it helpful to hear from and read the job requirements of officers and committee chairs in the booklet. This information will make recruiting people to serve in these positions easier. Additionally, I always learn something from this activity. **Connie Meyer, Sheboygan St. Luke**

Sheboygan St. Luke recently did an Outreach program.... We are sharing the program:

Membership, Nurture, and OUTREACH Campaign

UWF members at St. Luke in Sheboygan take outreach seriously, or at least we did in 2023.

A committee comprised of our Membership, Nurture, and Outreach Co-chairs and two active members of our unit concentrated on reaching all adult women at St. Luke who didn't belong to UWF with a personal invitation to join or participate.

The four-part outreach campaign included the following:

- 1. Create a contact list from our latest church directory, including phone numbers, email addresses, and home addresses.**
- 2. Send a group letter and a brochure describing our seven circles (see sample below). Contact me if you're interested in a copy of our circle brochure.**
- 3. Follow up with a personal phone call two weeks after the mailing using a prepared script and record all responses.**
- 4. Track responses or contact information updates on a spreadsheet and share it with the unit president and the church office to update contact information.**

Following are copies of the letter sent and telephone script:

Letter

Greetings!

We're thinking of you, as United Women in Faith activities resume at St. Luke U.M.C. for the fall season.

We'd like to invite you to join us, and we hope you'll consider the following options:

Join one or more of our UWF Circles. Please see the enclosed descriptions. All of the Circles are open to visitors, if you'd like to check one out.

Create a new circle with a group of friends. We'd be glad to help you get started.

Join as a "member at large" and help out at our fundraisers for missions.

Attend one of our General Meeting events. These include informational speakers and/or

fun activities, and are announced in the church newsletter and Grapevine.

Support our fundraising activities to benefit women, children, and youth in our community and throughout the world.

United Women in Faith has an open door membership policy. You don't have to be a member of a United Methodist church to belong. UWF provides opportunities to serve, to learn, and to enjoy the friendship and support of other women of faith. We hope you'll join us. We'll be in touch.

Yours in faith, The UWF Membership Committee

UWF Phone Call Script

GREETING: Hello, this is (your name) calling from St. Luke. I wanted to follow up and see if you received the letter we sent out recently from United Women of Faith.

IF NO: I'm sorry you didn't get the letter. I'd be glad to mail it out again, if you'll give me your current address. Or I could give you a summary of the information now, if you'd prefer. **POSSIBLE ACTIONS:**

- Get current address and email it to Lynn with request to mail letter.**
- Give summary: Our letter is an invitation to join or support UWF at St. Luke. (Read the options listed in letter.)**

IF YES: Did any of the options listed in the letter spark your interest?

POSSIBLE REACTIONS & FOLLOW UP ACTIONS OR RESPONSE:

- Reaction: I haven't read it yet. Response: Offer to give summary of info.**
- Reaction: I can't join at this time. Maybe next year. Response: Make note to follow up in a year.**
- Reaction: I will help with the Fall Bazaar. Response: We email name, etc. to Nora Kissinger.**
- Reaction: I will help with Brat Fry. Response: We email name, etc. to Deb Boutelle**
- Reaction: I'd like to visit (name of Circle). Response: We email or call the Circle leader to make arrangements.**
- Reaction: I'd like to join (name of Circle) but I need a ride.
Response: We email or call Circle leader to make arrangements.**
- Reaction: What is (name of Circle) like? Response: Share info from Circle descriptions and ask if you can have the Circle leader contact them.**
- Reaction: I'd like to join (name of Circle) Response: We email or call Circle leader to contact person.**
- Reaction: I have a group that wants to start a new Circle. Response: Great! I'll contact our UWF President, Connie Meyer, with your information. A UWF member will be contacting you with info on how to get started.**
- Reaction: I'm not a St. Luke member. OR I'm no longer a St. Luke member.
Response: You don't have to be a member at St. Luke to join UWF.**
- Reaction: I'm not interested. Please don't contact me again.**
- Response: Make note not to follow up.**

The results of this outreach campaign are that we have one new member, three potential members, and several women willing to volunteer for our fundraising events. However, the most important outcome of this campaign was the goodwill generated by these contacts.

Connie Meyer, President, St. Luke UWF, Sheboygan

INFORMATION FROM UNITS CON'T:

I delivered sewn & knitted items to Childrens Services in mid- December.

- United Women in Faith Potluck Christmas luncheon was awesome! Thank you to the 17 women who gathered around the table for fun, food and fellowship!

Our last Bake Sale was on Dec 3rd and profited \$247. Proceeds from our Bake Sales have helped United Women in Faith with their mission giving. Along with paying our Pledge to the District, we disburse all funds at the end of the year to be in mission through organizations giving aid directly to women and children.

We sent funds to:

\$300 to Willow Tree in Green Bay, an advocacy and help service for those who have been impacted by sex trafficking and other forms of sexual abuse. This group provided the excellent speaker, for the Ecumenical Brunch UWF sponsored back in April.

\$250 went to Children's Services of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, aiding children and their families in the Washington Park area.

\$250 was sent to Harbor House Women's Shelter in Superior.

UWF also manages a Used Book & Puzzle Exchange table. .25 for paperbacks, .50 for hard cover books & puzzles! This is an especially popular area at the "Seasoned Seniors" monthly luncheon that is a community outreach of our church....and it's surprising how those quarters add up!!

We are beginning to collect and cut the plastic grocery bags for the 'plarn' that Midwest Mission is using for the sleeping mats it is making. Learn about that project on the website midwestmission.org

Kay Waugh, President
SUAMICO UMC

Join us for the 2024 Annual Retreat

“The Psalm of my Heart”



“Praise the Lord , O my Soul” Psalm 104:a

Guest Presenter: Pastor Jim Droste, “Singing the Psalms”

Saturday, April 27, 2024 (deadline April 13th, 2024)

Kaukauna Peace, 2300 East Wisconsin Avenue, Kaukauna, WI 54130

(Offering will support “Loaves & Fishes Pantry”)

Registration 8:30, Program begins at 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

(make \$25..... checks to: NE District United Women in Faith)

Mail registration and check by April 13 to Registrar:

Sandra Klein, 6303 Riverview Drive, Two Rivers, WI 54241

Name _____ Unit _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____

Food allergies: _____ Phone: _____

Emergency contact & Phone: _____

North East District Shofar
C/O: Jan Stanko
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Brillion, WI 54110