

## Report for Annual Conference Journal 2013

### **UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**

**Our Purpose:** 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.

#### **Highlights of 2012**

**Membership.** We celebrate that 6730 women across Wisconsin Conference are members of United Methodist Women.

**Mission Action Day** was held March 24, 2012, at Tomah UMC. The theme was “Human Trafficking” featuring guest speaker Jane Tafel. 62 women attended. The event was planned by our four mission coordinators: Dodie Smith (Social Action), Kay Putman (Education and Interpretation), Donna Fae Kruse (Membership Nurture and Outreach), and Karen Stimeling (Spiritual Growth).

**Metro Region.** There had been a decline in participation by units in the Metro Region. To counteract this, Cathryn Luse was engaged to help Metro North and Metro South recruit officers and reenergize their district programming. By fall, both districts had filled most offices and were making great strides in planning for 2013.

**North Central Jurisdiction Gathering.** In June, women from 11 conferences gathered at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, for the Quadrennial Jurisdiction meeting. The theme was “Fill My Cup.” Sixteen women from Wisconsin attended. Six – Gloria Carter, Laura Pfeffer, Kay Putman, Dodie Smith, Karen Stimeling, and Judy Vasby- were voting delegates who were tasked with choosing directors for United Methodist Women at the national level. Gail Burgess and Julie Prouty were candidates representing Wisconsin. Neither was elected, but later, Chue Vang was chosen by the national organization to represent Wisconsin on the Program Advisory Board. This group of 70 meet once a year to give advice regarding mission projects, social advocacy, membership concerns, spiritual growth themes, and officer training. Also at Jurisdiction, Nancy Zabel gave a book report for a workshop on the UMW Reading Program, and Carol Holt Lahey was elected Vice President of the Jurisdiction for the next quadrennium.

**Charter For Racial Justice Program.** The Charter For Racial Justice Policies is a document that has been approved by Women’s Division and adopted by General Conference as a guide for reducing and eliminating racism in both church and society. UMW conference officers wrote a program specifically for use by units in Wisconsin. Called “Thoughts, Words, Deeds,” it included a devotional message using Matthew 22:34-40 and offered brief vignettes about racial

interactions that occurred in Wisconsin. A litany, based on the 2010 census facts, was developed highlighting disparities among ethnic groups in Wisconsin in areas of infant mortality, education, and access to medical treatment.

**School Of Christian Mission.** From July 31 to August 4, we held our School Of Christian Mission at Westwood Conference Center in Wausau. The theme was, “That All May Have Life.” The studies were: 1) Poverty- taught by Rob Odum and Judith Siaba; 2) Immigration and the Bible- taught by Dan Dick, Barbara Dick, and Fernando Siaba; 3) Haiti – taught by Deborah Thompson. To those who requested, Continuing Education Units were given to pastors and Advanced Lay Speaking/Ministry Certification to laity who attended the 4-Day session. Five pastors earned CEUs and 24 lay women earned advanced certification. There also was a class for teens led by Julie Prouty and Julia Mayeshiba. Our Dean was Julie Miehle; Assistant Dean, Dee Klawitter. Two pastors took advantage of the tuition scholarships offered to new pastors within the first three years of ordination. Also, several young women received scholarships from the Nancy Rivers and Gilpin funds. Overview day, a single day in which a “taste” of each study is presented, was held on Saturday, August 4.

**Limitless: National Young Women’s Event** During the same week as School Of Christian Mission, a group of four represented Wisconsin at Limitless: Redefine Tomorrow. This was a gathering at Duke University, Durham, NC, of young women and mentors from across the country. Our teen representatives were Joy Adedokun and Rachel Dorf. Our Young Women’s representative was Chelsey Ganzer. Our Team Mentor was Mary Lainberger. They returned with scriptural grounding, fresh ideas, and enthusiasm for engaging teens and young women all around our conference in the Purpose and work of United Methodist Women and to set a course that will ensure participation of young women into the future. They have given their team a name: LEGACY.

**Annual Gathering.** Our Conference Annual Gathering was held at Sun Prairie UMC on Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup> with an Evening of Enrichment the night before. The Theme was “Faith, Hope, Love-- Singing God’s Songs.” The Sun Prairie UMC music department provided a concert of spiritual and folk music on Friday night. On Saturday, the women were delighted to greet our new Bishop, Hee-Soo Jung. One highlight of the day was a “beauty” pageant at which officers made theatrical entrances, accompanied by hymns appropriate to their work, and presented reports as their talent competition. Members of the Nominations Committee were the judges. In the end, everyone was a winner because of their wonderful contributions to missions activities. Lucy Silvester, Vice President, was in charge of the programming and activities for the event. 215 women, men, and teens were in attendance.

**S.T.O.M.P.** On November 9-10, the Conference Team offered our first conference-wide training event. Held at the Mead Inn in Wisconsin Rapids, leadership was provided by Julia

Tulloch from our National Staff. The 137 women and men in attendance worked together to plan ways to Spiritually Transform Our Mission Purpose. We discussed what is good about UMW and why we are members, as well as what have been some problems. We dreamed about how a thriving unit, district, and conference organization would look. Then, we stomped out old ideas that were hindering our mission outreach, renewed our commitment to the Purpose of UMW, and stomped forward determined to make that vision a reality.

**Mabel Heil Scholarships.** This year, Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women awarded \$8750 in college scholarship money to seven applicants. This fund was begun by Mabel Heil and is available to United Methodist Women who are seeking a college education, both bachelor's degree and beyond. Recipients are chosen through an application process.

**Mission Giving.** We celebrate that in 2012, Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women gave \$311,097.84 to National UMW for mission work and contributed approximately \$80,000 more for programming, training, and administration in Wisconsin.

### **2013 Activities and Celebrations**

**Hmong House of Good News.** Hmong House of Good News was established by Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women in 2008 to provide Hmong elders in Milwaukee with a place to come for fellowship, nutritious food, and activities designed to improve mental and physical health. While we do not proselytize openly, the love of Jesus is demonstrated by the staff and volunteers who serve the elders. By action of the 2012 Annual Conference, Hmong House of Good News became a member of our Wisconsin Conference Health and Welfare Ministries. Since 2013 marks our fifth anniversary, plans have been made to celebrate with a commemorative dinner, a program and special offering at Mission u, and recognitions at district and conference meetings. Hmong House is located in Central UMC at 639 N. 25<sup>th</sup> St., Milwaukee. Our Director is Rev. Tsuker Yang.

**East Angola.** Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women is developing a relationship with the Women of East Angola Conference in Africa. Their President, Ana Ingles, visited our Annual Gathering in 2011. Our hope is to develop friendships between our units and their women's groups for the purpose of learning about cultural differences, sharing faith stories, and offering mutual support. Plans are being made to send Judy Vasby and Gloria Carter to Angola this year to meet the leaders and explore possibilities.

**Mission u.** By action of Women's Division, now called National United Methodist Women, School Of Christian Mission will be referred to as "Mission u" to appeal to youthful members and to maintain relevance in our current society. Mission u will be held July 22-25 at Westwood Conference Center in Wausau, with overview day on Friday, July 26. The studies will be

“Living Sacramentally, Walking Justly;” “Roma of Europe;” and “Poverty.” There will be classes for Teens and Young Adults, as well. Yo-Mi-Ca (Youth Mission Camp) will be held at Pine Lake Camp concurrently with Mission u.

**Annual Gathering 2013.** Our Conference Annual Gathering will be held at Asbury UMC in Madison on October 18-19. The theme is “Living the Heart of God.” Our schedule will be different this year, with our guest speaker being featured on Friday night and workshops and officer training being held on Saturday. Our new Vice President, Jean Bonney, is in charge of organizing this event.

**Living the Fruit.** Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women embraces the Annual Conference quadrennial theme of “Living the Fruit.” Our S.T.O.M.P. event is one example of how we restated our vision and engaged in planning ways to make our future vibrant. Our investment in LEGACY, our teen and young women leaders, is one way in which we are Preparing the Soil. Our thinking has shifted toward recognizing the Abundance we already have from God and away from worry about declining finances; toward focusing on recruiting new members who will sustain our Purpose into the future, not just on retaining those members we have; and on celebrating the gifts of all in our UMW community, regardless of age, economic status, or race/ethnicity.

**Resolution.** Being mindful that our Discipline declares that there shall be a unit of United Methodist Women in every local church, for celebrating the Purpose of United Methodist Women, and in keeping with tradition which is shown by our activities that encourage taking social action (Mission Action Day, Charter For Racial Justice, Hmong House of Good News), continuing mission education (School of Christian/Mission u, UMW Reading Program), support of women, children, and youth (Mabel Heil scholarships, Yo-Mi-Ca Camp, LEGACY, Northcott Neighborhood House) and many other forms of outreach, we propose this resolution for affirmation by Annual Conference:

**Be it resolved that on the third Sunday of September, (September 15, 2013) or any other Sunday that is agreeable with the local congregation, United Methodist Women’s Sunday shall be celebrated in every local church in Wisconsin Conference.**

Respectfully submitted by  
Judy Vasby, President  
Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women