



MISSION MATTERS

April 2018



President's Message

Laura Pfeffer

It is hard to believe that Mission u is practically around the corner yet again. Last year at this time I was in the midst of preparing to lead the Climate Justice study. Even though this was the second year I would be leading this study the preparation and updates between the two years required intensive time and dedicated research. It is a bit amazing how much work is required to generate 8 hours of informed, engaging and spirit-led interaction on a topic. Although I am not leading a study this year, I am laying the groundwork for my participation as a student by reading the study books and prayerfully considering what God has to reveal about this year's topics to me. It never fails to amaze me that topics which are chosen many years in advance are always relevant and challenging in today's world.

This year's repeated study is on the Missionary Conferences of the United Methodist Church in the United States. The Missionary Conferences (currently Alaska, Oklahoma Indian and Red Bird) all have fascinating histories with their own unique mission focus. Although I had heard of Missionary Conferences I must confess that I did not know their history, function and rules. Over the years many different special areas of missionary efforts have been served by special conferences meant to meet the needs of areas unable to be sustained under the traditional United Methodist conference structure and rules. Most have eventually been joined into traditional conferences, but the tension between the unique needs of some mission fields and our "one-size-fits-all" rules has played out in many ways over the years. By examining the history and current needs of our missionary conferences, we are able to see how "Mission With" sometimes requires stepping beyond "business as usual" into new and innovative relationships and contexts in order to incarnate the love of Christ to all.

Our bible study is actually a continuation and a deepening of last year's study on covenant community. This year's study on Embracing Wholeness attempts to focus on living in a covenantal relationship with all creation, with our community and ourselves in today's world. In some ways it seems like an impossible task. As someone who has worked on issues of environmental justice for many years I know how very difficult it is to live in right relationship with the created world. How much more difficult it seems to me to expect to also honor covenants with our community and ourselves in all things. Yet I also know that in many ways these things are intertwined. When my choices pollute or destroy the earth, this also hurts my community and my health. When I seek to live in ways in which I honor the created world I spend more time in nature, eat healthier food and seek out local food sources within my community. When Jesus said we are to "love our neighbors as we love ourselves" he reflects this link between our own well-being and that of our neighbors. If we only open our scope of connection a bit wider we see that our relationship of choices and actions are reflected in all creation and as we seek to bring healing, we must seek to repair and find wholeness at all levels to find lasting health and peace.

Continued on p. 4

Inside this issue:

Social Action - Charlene Mingst	2
Program Resources—Cindy Morse	2
Conversations on a Way Forward	3
Mission u	5
Mission u Registration forms	6-7
Calendar	8



As most everyone is aware; since 1970 April 22 has been designated as Earth Day, not only in the United States, but throughout the whole world. This year's theme is "End Plastic Pollution". Quoting from the web page of the Earth Day Network—"From poisoning and injuring marine life to disrupting human hormones, from littering our beaches and landscapes to clogging our waste streams and landfills, the exponential growth of plastic is now threatening the survival of our planet. In response, Earth Day 2018 is dedicated to providing the information and inspiration needed to funda

mentally change human attitude and behavior about plastics." Let's honor God's creation by not just celebrating this day, which happens to fall on a Sunday this year but to be a part of the activities that will make a difference. The Earth Day Network offers three toolkits—"Plastics Pollution Primer," "Earth Day Action", and "Plastics Pollution Teach-In"—that can be downloaded and used to plan events at your church or in your community.

Another perspective on

taking care of creation can be found in the article written for the April issue of response magazine titled—"Spiritual Wholeness and Climate Justice". The author, Ellen Lipsey, is a United Methodist Women Be Just. Be Green jurisdictional guide for the South Central Jurisdiction. She reminds us "Part of being whole persons in Jesus Christ includes a just relationship with earth and all its communities". She is also one of the writers of the leader's guide for the second part of the study series on covenantal living. "Embracing Wholeness: An Earth Perspective for Covenantal Living" is the 2018 United Methodist Women's spiritual growth study. This study is, of course, offered at Mission U 2018.

The author of the study, Jessica Stonecypher, is also featured in this month's response on pages 33-35, where she shares her journey toward "embracing wholeness".

Perhaps the activities suggested in regard to Earth Day or the studies offered by the United Methodist Women including the Be Just. Be Green initiatives can spur us on to make the right choices

that will nurture the earth and all who live here. The United Methodist Women mission study "*Climate Justice: A Call to Hope and Action*" is another resource that is available through United Methodist Women Mission Resources. I am going to leave you with words written by Pat Watkins in the Introduction of this study book. "We can never bring justice for God's people around the world until we bring justice to God's creation. And we will never be able to bring justice to the planet until we bring justice to all people. What we are doing to each other and what we are doing to God's creation are simply too interconnected."

And one more quote—from Edward Everett Hale—"I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."

May we all work to fulfill The Vision of United Methodist Women—Turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.



This year's theme is "End Plastic Pollution". Quoting from the web page of the Earth Day Network

Program Resources Cindy Morse

All the books needed for Mission U will be at our meeting on April 28th. So if you want to get an early start on your reading, they will be available. Also, hopefully, I will have all the books that are on the Reading Program with me. Hope to see all of you at the Spiritual Growth Retreat in Prairie du Chien on the 28th.

CONVERSATIONS ON A WAY FORWARD - What do you know about the Special General Conference called by our United Methodist Bishops for February 2019? Did you know that our national United Methodist Women Leaders want you to have your voices heard by our Conference Delegates to the Special General Conference? Do you know who our General Conference Delegates are?

In November 2017 Mary Lainberger and I attended UMW training on facilitating conversations about A Way Forward provided by our UMW National Office staff from New York as part of our Leadership Development Day training for new Conference UMW Officers. These conversations are an effort to expand knowledge about A Way Forward and to enable United Methodist Women to have their voices heard by our General Conference Delegates who will be acting on the report from The Commission on A Way Forward and the Council of Bishops' recommendations in February 2019. The delegates will be voting on our worldwide church's future at General Conference in 2020.

To learn about and follow the work of the Commission on a Way Forward go to the United Methodist Church website at:

<http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/commission-on-a-way-forward>

AND

<http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/commission-on-a-way-forward-5-things-you-need-to-know>

This is from the Commission's website:

"The Commission is to do a complete examination and possible revision of every paragraph of the Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and explore options that help to maintain and strengthen the unity of the church."

These are the OBJECTIVES given to Mary and I at our training:

- Be informed about the Special Session of General Conference in 2019 and the work of Commission on a Way Forward
- Clarify our thinking on what holds us together as a Church
- Develop confidence to share our views with other church members, including with our Annual Conference leaders and General Conference delegates around the unity of the Church

We were asked by our National Leadership to plan and implement the following:

- Host conversations between 1/2018 and 2/2019; with goal of at least 50% of total UMW membership participating.
 - Complete a Conference/District/Local Action Plan for hosting conversations
- Engage members to learn and understand the issues facing the church and have their own perspective

We ask you for your prayers and your help in the following ways:

- Are you interested in facilitating unit conversations?
- Is your unit interested in having Wisconsin UMW leaders facilitate a conversation?

A third member of our team trained in St. Louis was our Conference President Elect Shirley Carpenter. Unfortunately because of health challenges Shirley resigned before she was able to take office. We miss her presence but consult with her as much as possible.

Please contact us:

Mary Lainberger, National UMW Program Advisory Group
608-212-0506; or email mlainberger@charter.net

Sue Plasterer, Conference UMW Membership Nurture and Outreach Coordinator
608-274-0274; or email seplasterer@charter.net

Continued on p. 4

Our social justice study is on the topic of money. This topic is one of the most frequently mentioned topics in the bible and discussed by Jesus and yet it is also the one we are today most reluctant to discuss in church and with the members of our unit. Many years ago, I remember attending a retreat on the subject of financial stewardship. One of the exercises was to reflect on word associations we had with the topic of money. I was struck then by how many people associated money with security. This seemed a bit odd to me since at the time we had been suffering a downturn in the economy which reflected (in my opinion) how very fragile a trust in the "security" of money would be in reality. Another odd experience I had on to topic of money was a discussion I had with a member of my UMW unit. We were discussing saving and in particular how much we should save for our children. I was struck by the pressure my fellow UMW member felt to be able to give to her children an inheritance of some consequence. I was always of the "being of sound mind we spent it all" philosophy in my family, but I could see that in her eyes such an idea would seem irresponsible and un-loving. Unpacking our own understanding of the role of money for ourselves and our future is vital to our understanding of how to live a disciple of Jesus. This challenging study "What About Our Money? A Faith Response" allows us to unpack our relationship with money, the biblical and Wesleyan challenge to use money in a faithful way and the world's valuation of money as the ultimate measure of the value of all things and people.

No matter how or when you engage in these studies, I urge you to take advantage of these resources to grow spiritually. The study books and other associated books, websites and activities are invaluable in enabling you and I to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. God is continually asking you and I to become more and more like Jesus. I am convinced through all of the years in which I have participated in Mission u that we have been gifted with unique and powerful tools for doing this in these studies. Don't miss out on this opportunity to see what God has to say to you this year at Mission u. Bring back these studies to your unit and bring a friend or someone new to Mission u to experience this growth and challenge for themselves. I can tell you that this Mission u is an experience with the power to transform you and your faith in today's world. Come, invite a friend, meet God and grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Laura Pfeffer

President South West District UMW

Pfeffer.umw@gmail.com



Continued from p. 3 Conversations on the Way Forward

General Conference Delegates are listed on the Wisconsin Conference UMW website at this URL:
<https://www.wisconsinumc.org/connections/general-ncj-conferences/wisconsin-conference-delegates>

Our hope is to engage you and as many of our General Conference Delegates as possible in conversations about the future of our United Methodist Church.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sue Plasterer

Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women
Membership Nurture and Outreach Coordinator



Why Mission u?

Engaging Studies

The 2018 studies are:

- *Seeking Health and Wholeness*
- *What About Our Money? A Faith Response*
- *Missionary Conferences of the United Methodist Church*

Worry-free Accommodations

The event takes place at the Hotel Mead & Conference Center in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin.

- Air Conditioned rooms, plenary and classrooms.
- Meals served in the main dining area.
- Indoor pool and whirlpool.
- Outdoor sitting area.
- Elevators for convenient accessibility.
- Child care provided.

Fellowship, Worship & Fun!

- Plenaries and worship take place in the main ballroom.
- Crafts, puzzles and resources are available.
- A variety of displays are just outside the main ballroom.
- Videos are shown nightly.
- District gatherings take place during one evening.
- One evening is also set aside for a guest speaker.
- Communion is served the final day of the event.

Join us!

4-Day Mission u

Monday, July 23, 2018 to Thursday, July 26, 2018

Or

Friday, July 27, 2018 for Overview Day



**United
Methodist
Women**
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

Wisconsin Conference Mission u

July 23 – 26, 2018

Hotel Mead Convention Center - Wisconsin Rapids, WI

Adult Registration Form

Register for the event

(Page 1 of 2)

Name

Address, City, State, Zip

Home Phone

Cell Phone

Email

District
(Circle one)

North West

North Central

North East

South West

South East

Class Choice

Circle up to two classes

Embracing Wholeness: An Earth Perspective
for Covenantal Living

What About Our Money?
A Faith Response

Missionary Conferences of
The United Methodist Church
in the United States

Payment

Early Bird
Registration
Until June 1, 2018

Regular
Registration
Until July 1, 2018

Four Day Session

(includes food and sharing lodging)

\$350

\$425

Additional lodging on Sunday night, includes breakfast
(Sharing a room with another)

\$70

\$70

Four Day Session

(includes food and private room)

\$465

\$540

Additional lodging on Sunday night, includes breakfast
(Private room)

\$115

\$115

Total

Special dietary needs _____

Send Registration to:

Nancy Flath
R2170 County Road Q
Ringle, WI 54471

715-446-3252
njudyflath@gmail.com

Make checks payable to:

Mission u

Early Bird Registration rate ends June 1, 2018 ~ Regular Registration ends July 1



Adult Registration Form

Name

(Page 2 of 2)

_____ Attending Mission u for the first time *(Check here if this is your first time to Mission u)*

_____ Scholarship *(Check here to find out about Conference scholarships for Mission u)*
Also ask your local UMW unit or Church about scholarships that they may have.

Book Order

Check here to order your study books for pick up at Mission u Program Resources. Books are \$10 each.

OR

Order your books ahead and get them delivered to your home from
www.umwmissionresources.org or call 800-305-9857

_____ **Embracing Wholeness: An Earth Perspective for Covenantal Living**

_____ **What About Our Money? A Faith Response**

_____ **Missionary Conferences of The United Methodist Church in the United States**

Photo Release

Photos will be taken at Mission u and could be used in material to promote this event.

I permit my photo to be used by Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women to help share United Methodist Women with others.

_____ Name (Print)

_____ Sign

_____ Date

Emergency Contact

Name

Relationship

Best phone number(s) to contact them:

Is this person at Mission u?

For more information and registration forms go to:

www.wisconsinumw.org/mission-u.html

**South West District UMW
Newsletter**

10787 County Rd. K
Lancaster, WI 53813



**United
Methodist
Women**

FAITH · HOPE · LOVE IN ACTION

Calendar

April 21	Conference meeting
April 28	Spiritual Growth Retreat at Prairie du Chien
May 17-20	Assembly in Columbus, Ohio
June 23	District Team Meeting at Merrimac
July 23-26	Mission U 2018 in Wisconsin Rapids
July 27	Mission U Overview day
August 4	Mission Matters articles due
August 18	District Team Meeting at Bethany Madison
Sept. 1	Reading list due
Sept. 22	Annual Gathering at Bethany Madison

