



United
Women
in Faith

NORTHERN VIRGINIA DISTRICT UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

NOVA NOTES

APRIL 2025



Mission Statement

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence, and impact local and global communities.

UWF Updated Purpose

We are 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.

Northern Virginia District United Women in Faith Winter Games Party

Rescheduled from January-

Sunday, April 6, 2025, 2:00-4:00pm

Please come at 2:00 p.m. and bring:

- a bit of finger food to share
- a can or two of food to replenish the Fairfax UMC pantry
- a game that we'll all enjoy



The address of **Fairfax UMC-- 10300 Stratford Ave, Fairfax, VA 22030-3217.**

Do you need a ride?

We will have board games, card games, puzzles, and coloring sheets!

We will be collecting canned food at this event to help support the Fairfax UWF Food Pantry.

Join us and bring a friend! No RSVP Required. Free onsite parking. If you have any questions, please contact Beth Meserve beth.meserve@gmail.com

*Thank you to everyone who attended the NOVA District Ash Wednesday **Quiet Day Service**, hosted by St. John's United Methodist Church! Praise God for the nearly 50 UWF members attended! I also wish to thank Rev. J.W. Park, Mr. Paul Kigenza, and Marty Bickford for their assistance and leadership on this special day.*

*Shalom, Karlene Masters
Spiritual Life Coordinator*



UWF Member Spotlight On...

Maria Ward

nova.uwf.mno@gmail.com

Membership Nurture and Outreach

Maria is a blessed child of God and has been a member at Del Ray UMC in Alexandria for more than 40 years. She's been a member of United Women in Faith for 35. She currently serves as the mission coordinator for membership, nurture, and outreach for the Northern Virginia District UWF, after serving on the Alexandria District United Women in Faith team for 12 years as membership, nurture, and outreach coordinator; vice president; and president. She served on various committees at Rising Hope United Methodist Mission Church for eight years. Currently she is also serving as dean of the Virginia Conference Mission event for 2025 and 2026, working closely with Doris Douglass and others around the Conference. She loves encouraging women to grow in all aspects of their faith and to understand how their prayers, presence, gifts, and mission work bring about God's kingdom right here and right now.

Maria is married to a wonderful guy and is the proud mother of her lawyer son. Several years ago, she retired after almost 40 years as a business analyst and project manager for a software consulting firm. When God's call gives her a break, she enjoys folk dancing, watching old movies, reading, and doing handcrafts.

Faithful Witness – A Call for Congressional Courage”

On March 12 and 19, the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church hosted a **Prayer Vigil** to call Congressional leaders to action in addressing concerns of families impacted by recent legislative actions. Hosted by Sojourners, the ecumenical gatherings took place on a lawn of the U.S. Capitol Building.

On March 12, over 150 people gathered to speak out on the cuts in USAID, PEPFAR (The US President’s Plans for US AID Relief), and refugees. Holding signs of “It’s Time for Moral Courage,” they were led by inspiring speakers representing several faith groups: Christians, Muslims and Jews. Maria Ward and Marlene Dakita from the NOVA District UWF joined in this peaceful vigil (pictured below).

On March 19, the Prayer Vigil gathered again to focus attention on children and families who are affected by cuts to Medicaid, CHIP, SNAP, and the Department of Education, programs that protect and help to sustain families across the country. Brenda Romenius and other UMC members, as well as numerous faith groups from around the country, prayed and exhorted the need to hold congressional leaders accountable for the decisions that are affecting the most vulnerable in our society. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 37.9 million Americans are impoverished (12.4% of the population); 10.5 % of people in the U.S. aged 65 or over live in poverty (www.census.org). The Children’s Defense Fund states nearly 9 million children in the U.S. are living in poverty; one in five children goes hungry each day. (www.childrensdefense.org).

As United Women in Faith, we called to faith in action. You can view and hear the inspiring speakers of these two prayer vigils at the General Board and Church Society (GBCS) website at www.umcjustice.org. I urge you to consider joining this form of peaceful call to action of our country’s leaders to address social concerns that affect the most vulnerable in our society.

Be a Part of the Movement: Another “Faithful Witness – Prayer Vigil” will be held on Wednesday, March 26. Gathering takes place at the Methodist Building, 100 Maryland Avenue NE, Washington, DC at 11:30 AM (near Union Station Metro). The Vigil takes place at Noon, at an easy walk nearby to the Capitol Grounds. If you cannot attend in person, you can watch livestream at links provided at the GBCS website.

PROVERBS 31: 8-9 [sayings of King Lemuel inspired utterance by the mother who taught him]
“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

Peace & Grace,
Brenda Romenius
NOVA District United
Women in Faith



*Join us for a weekend full of spiritual rejuvenation with
retreat leader Rev. Dr. Joanna Dietz!*



**Friday-Sunday, May 2-4 -- Virginia Conference UWF Spiritual
Life Retreat (SLR)**

"The Joy of Sisterhood"

Massanetta Springs Conference Center, Harrisonburg, VA

Click here to learn more and register:

<https://uwfaith.org/event/virginia-conference-soul-care-retreat-joy-of-sisterhood/>

Check-in: Friday, May 2, 4 p.m., Depart: Sunday, May 4, 2 p.m.

Massanetta Springs Conference Center in Harrisonburg, VA <https://massanettasprings.org/>

Early Bird (before March 18) registration fee is \$175.

After March 18 the regular registration fee is \$195.

This fee covers 2 nights in a shared room, 6 meals, and lots of excellent programming.

Scholarships are available – contact Maria Ward nova.uwf.mno@gmail.com

The registration for the **Spiritual Life Retreat** is now available by going to vauwf.org and clicking on the link under Frances Ellis' picture. Please help spread the word.

Registration for the in-person **Spiritual Life Soul Care Retreat** is still open until **April 11.**

Registration link: <https://na.eventscloud.com/ereg/index.php?eventid=829672&>

Facebook event to share: <https://www.facebook.com/events/674130748478126/>

Contact: Frances Ellis (VAUWF Spiritual Growth Coordinator) vauwfsg@gmail.com



For the 2025 NOVA United Women in Faith Calendar of events:

<https://www.novauwfaith.org/>

****Also. on this site is the 2025 NOVA District Officers and contact information.**

A 1925 writing From Phyllis Geoghegan to social action contacts:

During Lent, let us:

Fast from emphasis on differences; Feast on the unity of life....

Fast from words that pollute; Feast on phrases that purify...

Fast from that which excludes; Feast on the love of God that includes.

Fast from anger; Feast on patience.

Fast from pessimism; Feast on optimism.

Fast from complaining; Feast on appreciation.

Fast from worry; Feast on trust in God's care....

Fast from facts that depress; Feast on truths that uplift.

Fast from thoughts that weaken; Feast on promises that inspire....

Fast from discouragement; Feast on hope.

Rising Hope Charity Golf Tournament

Join us **Monday, May 19** at Greendale Golf Course for a round of golf to raise funds to help men and women of all ages who are struggling to overcome poverty. We will have prizes for the top three finishers, as well as for the longest drive. You could even win a car!

This annual event raises funds to help men and women of all ages who are struggling to overcome poverty or homelessness. Your support of this event will have a huge impact on the lives of the men and women along the Route 1 Corridor.

Register by Friday, April 25: <https://www.risinghopeumc.org/annual-golf-tournament>



Maybe golfing isn't your thing. We also have sponsorship opportunities available. Email us at events@risinghopeumc.org for details.

We also have SPONSORSHIP opportunities available. Email us at events@risinghopeumc.org or review [this form](#) for details

*From the 2025 UWF Prayer Calendar
selection submitted to UWF District newsletter by Karlene Masters*

Did you know that the mid-week prayers are available on Facebook through the group "Daily Prayer Guide"? (<https://www.facebook.com/dailyprayerguide>) It's a wonderful way to share these prayers with your UWF unit!

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" ~ Luke 17:5



April 2 – Lord, thank you for the children who are your instruments in your holy hands. They teach us about you. May the Holy Spirit teach us to bear the fruit of this example and continue to worship you in our community of faith. In the name of Jesus. Amen! Leo Garcia, Global Missionary from Latin American and the Caribbean serving in Angola

April 9 – Creator God, may your love bridge the gaps in torn families and communities. Bless us with understanding, compassion, and reconciliation for one another. May bonds be mended, and hearts reunited in harmony. Amen. Whitney Simpson, Order of Deaconess and Home Missioner, Exploring Peace Ministries, Lebanon, Tennessee

April 16 – Creator Father, Mother, and Spirit, we celebrate the intergenerational bonds within our communities and congregations. Strengthen our ministries and multi-generational ministers in our connectedness to you and each other. Jamie LeJeune, Order of Deaconess and Home Missioner, Court Street UMC, Hattiesburg, Mississippi

April 23 – Holy God, thank you for your amazing grace. Grant us wisdom to guard our hearts and fill our minds with godly thoughts. Amen! Althea Belton, Church and Community Worker, Gulfside Assembly, Waveland, Mississippi

April 30 – Thank you God for blessing us with intergenerational friendships to guide and lead us in ministry. Thank you for the generations sharing their talents and love. Jeremiah Aketachunak, Fourth Grade Student Partners in Ministry System Afterschool Program, Laurinburg, North Carolina,

WOMEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST at St. John's United Methodist Church, Springfield, VA was Saturday March 15, "United Women in Faith: Transforming Communities", Featured was Friends of Guest House of Alexandria- *Helping women successfully reenter the community after incarceration*



Monetary Donations will go to Friends of Guest House, and UWF Mission Giving. Prayer Breakfast offering totaled **\$1,040** (split 50-50 between Guest House and UWF Mission Giving)



Terri Morton, Director of Workforce Development from the Friends of Guest House



Kamyulh & Terri shared their personal stories.

For digital information and access, first go to the UWF digital network: <https://uwfaith.mn.co/feed>

Podcasts & Webinars:



[Faith Talks](#)



[Voices From the Field](#)



[Just Energy for All](#)

United Women in Faith is now on **Bluesky**. [Follow us!](#)

Facebook United Women in Faith [52K followers](#) • [124 following](#)

A vision for the quadrennium: General Secretary and CEO Sally Vonner [has a message](#) about leadership and the vision for our next quadrennium. [Good things are ahead.](#)

The **Officer Resource Page** is a collection of important links and information relevant for conference officers. You can access it through the United Women in Faith Members & Leaders portal at uwfaith.org/members-and-leaders/officer-toolkit.



<https://umcreationjustice.org/>

sign up for monthly tips, newsletter, blog, Creation Justice News & stories

MISSION OPPORTUNITY:

Dear Friends of the Northern Virginia District United Women in Faith,
As generous supporters of libraries and reading here is an opportunity to assist a small Appalachian community library restore new books to their 'flooded library'. See more information below.

Levenia Kibler,
President of Herndon UWF
uwf@herndonumc.org

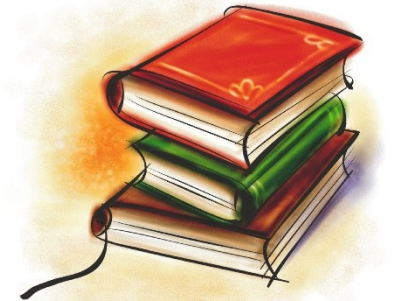
Mission Project - This year's Herndon United Women in Faith's Spring Retreat's special mission project is to support the Hot Springs Library adoption program. Due to Hurricane Milton, the creek in Hot Springs, NC burst through the walls of their little public library destroying sections of the building and many of the library's books, as well as doing significant damage to other businesses in the town. Herndon United Women in Faith's mission project for the March 29 retreat was to support the book adoption drive. There are still books left to purchase if any of you would like to do so!! The Hot Springs librarian has chosen these books and only these new books will be accepted.

Want to support the library, but cannot attend the retreat—click on the link below, choose book(s) and check them off of the library list, go shopping at your favorite online store and send directly to the library. Checking the books off of the list lets the librarian and others know that you intend to purchase and send that book. Then you will need to go shopping online at Amazon, Walmart or your favorite online store that has NEW BOOKS.

All "adopted" books chosen from the librarian's list should be sent to the main library of the Madison County Public Library system for processing as replacement copies.

Address: 1335 N Main St., Marshall NC 28753 Attn: Kim Bellofatto,
Library Director

Here is the link for the list of books needed:
Visit <https://bit.ly/hsl-adoption>



LET'S FLOOD THE LIBRARY WITH NEW BOOKS!

Reading Program Author Talk

**With Heather McTeer Toney on *Before the Streetlights Come On: Black America's Urgent Call for Climate Solutions*
Wednesday, April 30, 2025, 7PM-8PM ET/ 4PM-5PM PT**

Join United Women in Faith members and friends for a special **Reading Program Author Talk with Heather McTeer Toney** on *Before the Streetlights Come On: Black America's Urgent Call for Climate Solutions* in celebration of Earth Month. *Before the Streetlights Come On* is a [2025 United Women in Faith Reading Program](#) selection.

About *Before the Streetlights Come On*:

In *Before the Streetlights Come On*, climate activist Heather McTeer Toney insists that those most affected by climate change are best suited to lead the movement for climate justice. McTeer Toney brings her background in politics, community advocacy, and leadership in environmental justice to this revolutionary exploration of why and how Black Americans are uniquely qualified to lead national and global conversations around systems of racial disparity and solutions to the climate crisis. As our country delves deeper into solutions for systemic racism and past injustices, she argues, the environmental movement must shift direction and leadership toward those most affected and most affecting change: Black communities.



About Heather McTeer Toney:

You can read more about her [here](#).

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/jmZ2p8UOT0CVIxdS8l_WCg?mc_cid=fa9e379adf&mc_eid=42e341edfd#/registration

All are welcome. There is no cost to participate. Pre-reading of the book is not required, but it will enrich your experience of the author talk. Registration is accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

P.S. If you are planning to purchase this book, consider buying it through our United Women in Faith affiliate page, bookshop.org/shop/uwfaith, to earn 10% back for the organization!



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United Women in Faith co-hosts gathering for climate justice at General Conference, by Tara Barnes

General Conference is more than just voting on legislation. While gathered together, United Methodists from around the world worship, pray, break bread, and lift up causes with one another.

This year, sponsored by the church's [Creation Justice Movement](#), United Women in Faith is partnering with Global Ministries, the Love Your Neighbor Coalition, and the General Board of Church and Society for an Earth Day vigil on April 22. The featured speaker will be Dr. Musa Dube, Botswanan theologian and Professor of New Testament at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. She is author of *The HIV and AIDS Bible* and *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*.

If you'll be in Charlotte later this month, **join us at First United Methodist Church in Charlotte for the 7 p.m. (ET) vigil**. Global Ministries is also hosting dinner at the church at 5:30. The event will be livestreamed as well. Whether you'll be joining us in person or in solidarity online, please register [at this link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeZC19nV_-fKFw9nBxaEPbToR3m4FSAphJHxvXiN3dX0Y5SAw/viewform?pli=1). (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeZC19nV_-fKFw9nBxaEPbToR3m4FSAphJHxvXiN3dX0Y5SAw/viewform?pli=1)



In Memory...

Mary Virginia Wright was called home to be with the Lord on Saturday February 22, 2025, after a long illness. Mary was active in the Methodist Women of Faith and served as the Spiritual life coordinator for the district. She joyfully served in that position for many years and made many friends.

Mary Wright was such an extraordinary woman, deeply committed to United Methodist Women/UWF. She not only served at the District level, but also years ago at the Conference level -- and, most recently, on the Conference

Nominations Committee.

A celebration of life for Mary Virginia Wright at 10:30am on March 10th at St. Paul United Methodist Church at 1400 G St, Woodbridge, VA 22191. UWF members attended pictured on right.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be **Online:** www.lifewithcancer.org , in memory of Mary Virginia Wright.




By mail: INOVA Health Foundation
Attention Foundation Department
8095 Innovation Park Dr, .Fairfax, VA 22031
Indicate "Life with Cancer" on your check.



Women's Prayer Breakfast
SAT, APR 5TH | 9-11:15AM | GUBACK CENTER
 1301 COLLINGWOOD RD | GUBACK CENTER (ENTER AT DOOR #7)

GUEST SPEAKER REV. CLAIRE MILLER,
PASTOR AT WASHINGTON FARM UMC

VISIT ALDRSGATE.NET/UWF
 FOR MORE INFO



April 2025

Remember that our creation justice work of restoration, regeneration, and renewal grows from God’s gift of the Resurrection, the Easter-faith that sustains us in our lives and **our calling to love both Creator and Creation.**

“Our Power, Our Planet,” the theme of [Earth Day 2025](#), invites everyone around the globe to unite behind renewable energy. The gifts of God—sun, wind, oceans, and land—are there for us and with us. Using them rather than continuing with fossil fuels will save our planet. **Join with others and use your power**—your voice, your actions, your advocacy—to love Earth.

Take 10 minutes to watch [Chasing Arrows: The Truth About Recycling](#). The “arrows” are the recycle sign—often a source of great confusion. **Discover the truth about recycling.** What is really recyclable. What happens after it’s collected. What solutions we need to pursue. With this knowledge, you’ll be better able to love Earth every time you recycle.

Go local. Connect with neighbors and community organizations to understand the environmental challenges and opportunities specific to your area. Then use your united people power to have a heart to heart with local officials to get the change that’s needed. Show your love for Earth.

Follow your heart and invest in the future. Choose what you can: solar and wind, energy-efficient appliances, hybrid or electric vehicles, voting for electric public transit, quality and long-lasting fashion made of natural textiles, insurance and banks that do not support fossil fuels. Let God use your financial resources, your love, and your power to aid the healing of Earth and the righting of injustices.

One youth celebrated his birthday with a litter pick-up party for his “adopted” street. The friends snagged the trash, bagged it, weighed it, photographed it, and spread the story to encourage and challenge others to do better about caring for our home. Cake, music, and fun followed—a joyous celebration of **one person with a heart of gold, showing how to love Earth.**

Green up your closet. Purchase items from brands that make sustainable clothing. Visit local thrift or consignment shops, which often offer unique, gently worn, or even new garments at a lower price than retail. Donate clothes that no longer fit or send your worn-out textiles to [ReTold](#). (<https://www.retoldrecycling.com/>) You’ll love the new you and you’ll be loving Earth too.



United Methodist founder Charles Wesley's Easter hymn "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" is a celebration of resurrection and new life. © Image by Kathryn Price, United Methodist Communications.

Have a Blessed Easter!

**Mission u—Save the Date— [vauwf.org/missionu](https://www.vauwf.org/missionu)
<https://www.vauwf.org/missionu>**

The website for Assembly 2026 is now open!
This year's Assembly, themed "*Dream it! Believe it! Do it!*"
will take place in Indianapolis,
May 15-17, 2026. Registration opens Sept. 1, 2025.
Visit [UWFaith.org/Assembly](https://www.vauwf.org/assembly) to learn more!

