



United Women in Faith

NORTHERN VIRGINIA DISTRICT

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

NOVA NOTES

DECEMBER 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

CONGRATULATIONS ST. JOHN'S UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH!



More about the UWF District 2025 Annual Meeting - "CARRYING OUR FAITH FORWARD" with Speaker: Doris Douglass-Past Arlington District President, Mission in Motion: Witnessing God's Work in Cuba

On October 4th, the Northern Virginia District of United Women in Faith held its annual meeting (District Day) at Friendship UMC.

2025 Annual Meeting Details –

Thank you, Marty Bickford and the St. John's

UWF members are the best!

Thank you for your Love, Hope and Inspiration-Love in Action!

REPORT FROM THE NOVA DISTRICT UWF TREASURER

At District Day, the annual meeting of the Northern Virginia District of United Women in Faith, held at Friendship UMC on October 4, two important items on the agenda were discussed and adopted. They were the Administrative & Membership Development Fund (A&MD) Budget for 2026 in the amount of \$5,697, and the Pledge to Mission to the Virginia Conference UWF in the amount of \$45,000. Additionally, the members and units listed below were recognized for their achievements:

Candle Burning – Units donated a total of \$1,949. The candle burned for 54 minutes, symbolizing the mission work the NoVA District UWF has supported during the past year.

Rainbow Givers – 12 members

Dawn Copland - Andrew Chapel
Marty Bickford – St. John's
Doris Douglass – Friendship
Debra Fairweather – Mount Olivet
Shellie Klet - Herndon

Stella Magusiak - Sydenstricker
Karen McElfish – Mount Olivet
Janet Oak – Mount Olivet
Lorie Rezendes - Aldersgate
Maria Ward – Del Ray

Units contributing to the Five/Six Channels of Mission Giving - Pledge to Mission, Gift to Mission, Gift in Memory, Special Mission Recognition, World Thank Offering, and Candle Burning:

Six-Star Units

Aldersgate Herndon
Del Ray Mount Olivet
Friendship St. John’s

St. Matthew’s
St. Paul
Sydenstricker

Five-Star Units

Andrew Chapel
Annandale
Fairlington

Legacy Fund - 6 individuals and 4 units contributed:

Carolyn Smith – Good Shepherd Aldersgate UWF
Marty Bickford – St. John’s Fairlington UWF
Suzanne Dorick – St. John’s Good Shepherd UWF
Brenda Romenius – St. John’s St. Paul UWF
Martha Ann Lee – St. Matthew’s
Nancy Miller - Sydenstricker

Note: More UWF members may have contributed to the Legacy Fund online but it was not reported to the Treasurer.

Special Mission Recognition – The following Mission Team officers stepping down from their positions were recognized and thanked for their service to the NoVA District UWF: Bianca Roberts, Secretary; Marty Bickford, Treasurer; and Brenda Romenius, Nominations Committee Chair. They were all instrumental in furthering THE PURPOSE of United Women in Faith. They will be missed.

On Saturday, October 25, the Virginia Conference United Women in Faith held its 53rd annual meeting in person at Trinity UMC in Richmond. At that meeting, it was announced that of the eight districts in the Virginia Conference UWF, the NoVA District UWF placed:

- 1) 3rd (Bronze) in LIOP achievements
- 2) 2nd in the largest number of books read in the Reading Program
- 3) 1st in the largest number of readers in the Reading Program

Well done, everyone!! Congratulations!! Thank you for your wonderful support in 2025. Onward to 2026.
Marty Bickford





Mid-week prayers from the 2025 UWF Prayer Calendar

December 2025

Faith is the reality of what we hope for, the proof of what we don't see.

Hebrews 11:1

December 3 (*International Day of Persons with Disabilities*) – *Gracious God, our lives are filled with reasons not to hope, but faith says to hold on! Amen.* ~ Shelly Owen, Order of Deaconess and Home Missioner, Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

December 10 (*International Human Rights Day*) – *Beloved Creator, help us to remember that we are all created in your image. No matter our age, nationality, gender identity, or faith tradition, help us remember that we are siblings, all of sacred worth in your eyes and your call is to love one another.* ~ Mandy Caruso-Yahne, Order of Deaconess and Home Missioner, University of Missouri – Kansas City, Kansas City, Missouri

December 17 – *Gracious Creator, we thank you for the gift of intergenerational friendships, where wisdom meets youthful energy. Bless these connections that bridge generations, fostering understanding, love, and shared growth. Amen.* ~ Gail Douglas-Boykin, Order of Deaconess and Home Missioner, New York Conference of the United Methodist Church, White Plains, New York

December 24 – *Grant us the grace to receive your Spirit from those who come before us and entrust us with the faith to carry your will to those who come after. In your son's name. Amen.* ~ Patrick Booth, Global Missionary from the United States serving in Cambodia

December 31 – *Hold my hand, Lord, and walk with me, just as you walked with generations before me. I need you every hour. Amen.* Grace Musuka, United Women in Faith Regional Missionary, Africa



MARK YOUR CALENDARS OR REGISTER EARLY FOR DISCOUNT!

United Methodist Day at General Assembly

Date: January 29, 2026 Time: 7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Location: Centenary UMC (Parking Lot Address: 400 E Franklin St Richmond, VA 23219) Fees: \$25 through Dec. 12 or \$40 through Jan. 18

Early Bird: \$25 (valid through 12/12/25) Regular Registration: \$40 (closes 1/18/26) Student: \$10

Registration link

(<https://brushfire.com/vaumc/umdayatthegeneralassembly2026/614665>)

These are a repeat for the newsletter but their content changes monthly!

Podcasts & Webinars (click on title under image):

Past podcasts, Interviews & Discussions are recorded for YOU! Don't miss any!



[Faith Talks](#)



[Voices From the Field](#)



[Just Energy for All](#)



Voices From the Field: Love, Justice, Service: Deaconesses & Home Missioners in Ministry, December 2, 2025, Tuesday · 7:30pm - 9:00pm EST

Hear how three newly consecrated deaconesses are living out their lifetime calls to love, justice, and service.

Guests are:

- Deaconess Myra Cruz Cubos, California-Nevada Conference – CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) for Foster Youth, Fresno, CA
- Deaconess Rebecca Miller, Western Pennsylvania Conference – Physician Assistant, Warren General Hospital, Warren, PA
- Deaconess Dr. Ginny Witehouse, Kentucky Conference – Professor/Director of ICCA School of Communication, Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, KY, An optional breakout session will follow the one-hour program.

Don't miss the opportunity to join the Voices from the Field virtual event to find out more about the work of the Office of Deaconess and Home Missioner, administered by United Women in Faith. Learn from people who are transforming their communities and how you, through Mission Giving, make this transformation possible.

****Register Now:** <https://na.eventscloud.com/ereg/index.php?eventid=861240&>



December 09, 2025

United Women in Faith Digital Open House (December)

Tuesday · 8:00pm - 9:00pm EST

Community Gathering , December Program, Thursday · 8:00pm - 9:00pm

Livestream -Join us for the next monthly Community Gathering on **December 4 at 8:00 pm** ET where we will discuss the December program from the 2025 Program Resource. All are welcome to join us for the last gathering of the year! We will discuss putting love into action .

[Click here to register.](#)



December 2025

Give light. Christmas lights are symbols of the Light that came into the world with the birth of Christ. Enjoy them and use LEDs to take care of the world that Jesus lit up with his presence. LED lights use 1/10 as much energy as conventional holiday lights, and they last years longer.

Give a creature to love. Browse gifts.worldwildlife.org for the perfect gift choice for your children or grandchildren. The organization ([WWF](https://www.worldwildlife.org)) offers adoption options for many amazing creatures, plus numerous cute plush animals to choose from. Give the gift and talk with your young person about loving all of God’s creatures.

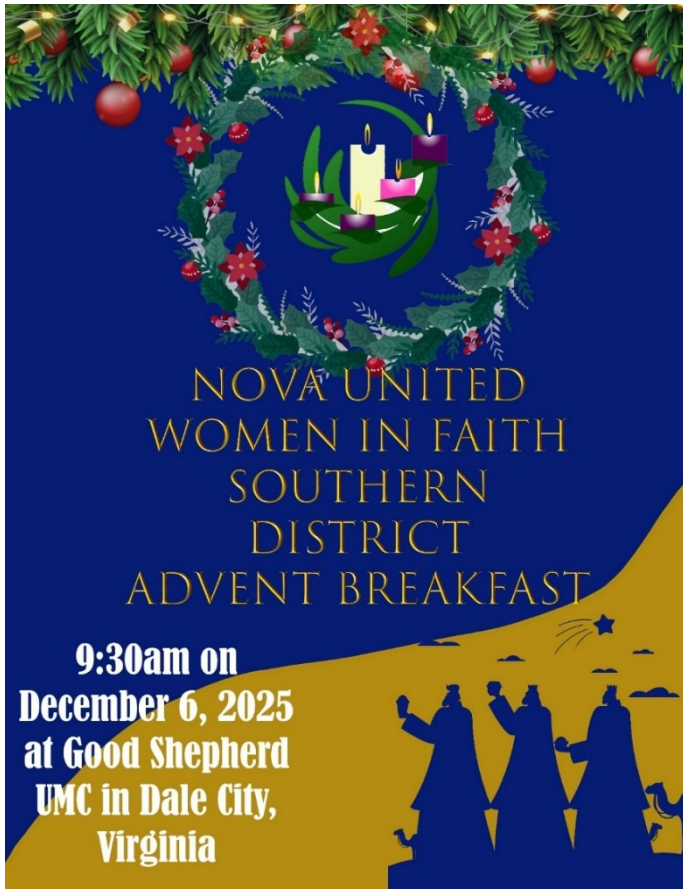
Give the story. When you shop online for gifts, check the “About” portion of the website before you buy. Find out what the company is or is not doing to care for creation and justice. Look for [B Corp](#) and other companies that give back [1% for the planet](#). Tell the story to the gift recipient too.

Give the gift of giving. Help a young person experience philanthropy directly. Give the funds and then together explore local non-profits related to environmental care or international ones such as [Heifer International](#) that are likely to connect with your young person. Talk about why you give and encourage them to remember God’s gift of love for people and planet.

Give gifts that last. Sustainability applies not only to the toys you give but also to the interest of the child. Toy companies like [EarthHero](#) and [Green Toys](#) provide cognitive, memory, mobility, and educational toys and games from materials like wood and recycled plastic—encouraging natural play in young ones that isn’t just staring at a screen. These toys tend to survive in good enough shape to pass along to another generation.

Give to help others. The innkeeper gave shelter to the Holy Family and likely some food too. Who in your community is struggling with meeting basic needs? Volunteer at a local shelter or donate to a food drive. Seek out opportunities that help people and planet. Both are in need.





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All are welcome to attend. For more information, please contact Alnetta McCall.

Phone number: (703) 389-0201,
Email nette531@yahoo.com.

Good Shepherd UMC
14999 Birchdale Ave
Dale City, VA 22193



UWF LOVE IN ACTION! Our UWF sisters made hats, scarves and gloves for Ukraine, which were collected at the Oct. 25th Annual Meeting in Richmond. Ukrainians distributing these by the member of Spring of Life UMC in Kiev



An Evening with Ellie Lofaro

November 14 was a magical evening in the sanctuary of Herndon UMC as uplifting music was played by Dr Melissa Chavez, an opening prayer was lifted by Pastor SeongJae Jo and introductions were made by members of Herndon UWF. We welcomed approximately 86 women, men, and teens to hear Ellie Lofaro speak on Joshua 3 about being an overcomer!! We laughed, we clapped, and we sang, but most of all we listened as Ellie Lofaro shared her life, her faith in Jesus and especially her belief in God’s word. We heard the importance of the Shelter House ministry from Shatoya Snell and folks attending were moved by her words and donated \$2000 for the women and families they serve. For more about shelter house (<https://www.shelterhouse.org/>).



Ellie is the author of five books which were sold after the event. One of the photos shows some of the team of women who planned, prayed for, and organized this event with God’s help and guidance.

-Levenia Kibler, President of Herndon UWF



United
Women
in Faith

Fairlington UWF Holiday Fundraiser 2025

Proceeds from our fundraisers support local and national non-profits impacting the lives of women, children, and youth. Email us at FairlingtonUMW@gmail.com for details or to ask questions.

2025 White House Historical Association Ornament



The **2025 White House Ornaments** have arrived! This year's ornament honors the 150th anniversary of State Dinners hosted by the White House and features two distinct plates from the White House State china collection. Fairlington UWF is selling them for \$25 each (for 1-9 ornaments) or \$24 each if you purchase 10+ ornaments.

Reserve your ornament by emailing Karlene Masters at Fairlingtonumw@gmail.com. We will confirm your order, the amount owed and arrange pick up or delivery.

Your **check payable to Fairlington United Methodist Women** is due when the items are delivered.



**THANK YOU for supporting Fairlington UWF Holiday Fundraiser!
We are so grateful!**



Spotlight on UWF member *Beth Meserve*

My name is Beth Meserve, and I attend Sterling United Methodist Church. My walk with God is a testament to the fact that God never gives up on his children.

I grew up the daughter of a Baptist minister. I became a member of the Baptist church at a young age and attended regularly through high school. While in college, I became organist at a United Methodist Church and realized that I had found my church home. As my pastor says, I became a recovering Baptist.

I married Steve Meserve, who was a gift from God to me. Our marriage was blessed with two children and an abundance of love. We were married until his death 11 years ago.

Steve and I attended church regularly, although he was more faithful than I was. My attendance became sporadic, while Steve attended regularly, teaching Sunday School, leading Bible Studies, and even preaching on occasion.

God wasn't finished with me, however. A friend, Donna Meyer, asked me to attend an Emmaus Walk. I said no, but God used that as a nudge to get me back to a closer walk with him. I began attending church regularly and even started attending UMW meetings. Eventually I did attend an Emmaus walk, and it was a life-changing experience.

I began to seek God regularly. I began to say "yes" instead of always saying "no." I became Secretary of our local UMW and found that I was especially drawn to the mission work of our organization. I became more passionate about our work and eventually became President of our unit.

At a District Annual Meeting, our District President asked for nominations from the floor. God told me strongly that I needed to join the District team. I felt compelled to stand up and volunteer. I started as E&I Mission Coordinator and eventually became District President.

Working with the District team has been a deeply satisfying experience. It has been a privilege to work with such an amazing group of women. When the Arlington and Alexandria Districts combined, I found even more wonderful women to work with, and I have been greatly blessed by my experiences.

There is still a lot of work to do in this world. We are stronger together, and we can accomplish much. Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. God will bless you greatly. I pray God will help us do even greater things as we continue to seek His will.

Christmas Gift Ministry for Fluvanna CCW

Many, many **thanks to all of you who donated** toiletries, stationery, and greeting cards to the Christmas Gift Ministry for the women incarcerated at the Fluvanna Correctional Center in Troy, Virginia. Your generosity and commitment are so vital to the success of this ministry.

Last month I delivered to my Fluvanna contact 89 hygiene kits, and several boxes/bags containing stationery, greeting cards, additional toothbrushes, toothpaste, lotion, shampoo and deodorant.

Also, over \$1,000 was contributed by individuals and units to the Fluvanna Resource Fund administered by GraceInside. These funds are used to purchase hygiene kit shortages, or provide travel expenses for funeral or deathbed visits, worship materials, and other incidentals necessary to support the prison population.

At Christmas about 1,200 grateful women at Fluvanna are given the hygiene kits. They look forward to receiving them. Just to know that people “in the outside world” are thinking of them, especially during the holidays, is very important to their outlook on life.

GraceInside (the chaplaincy that oversees this ministry) wrote: “We appreciate your continued support of this important ministry and thank you for your generosity and service to the Lord.”

Again, thank you for your contributions to this great mission outreach, and for all you do to support women, children, and youth year after year. May you and yours be truly blessed this holiday season.

-Marty Bickford





The website for Assembly 2026 is open!

This year's Assembly, themed "*Dream it! Believe it! Do it!*" will take place in Indianapolis, May 15-17, 2026.

Visit UWFaith.org/Assembly to learn more Stacey Abrams, Workshops, Soul Care, Town Halls, & More. Registration Now Open, Early Bird Pricing Through **November 30, 2025!**



Stacey Abrams-Keynote Speaker



Carolyn Abrams-Keynote Speaker

We are thrilled to share that Assembly 2026 will host longtime United Methodists Stacey Abrams and longtime UWFaith member Rev. Carolyn Abrams in conversation as our Inspiration Speakers.



Unfortunately, this well-known photo from 1957

Assembly Event Welcomes Elizabeth Eckford as a 2026 Keynote Speaker. Photo from the first day of school attempt of desegregation at Central High

School, Little Rock, Arkansas, on September 4, 1957.

Eckford continues to speak out with her message. United Women in Faith feels truly blessed that Eckford will be joining us on the evening of Saturday, May 16, 2026, at Assembly in Indianapolis, sharing her legacy as our keynote speaker for the Legacy Banquet.

Eckford was one of the "Little Rock Nine." Photo without the other eight, who would join her on future attempts to enter the school, she bravely walked through that angry crowd with grace and her head held high. The photo, taken by Will Counts, has been called the most iconic image of the Civil Rights Movement.

Follow Us on Social Media



ON THE DAY BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY STARTS....

Soul Care Retreat: Make Space for You



Imagine stepping into feeling completely grounded and refreshed. We invite you to begin your experience with our **1-day Soul Care Retreat** on **Thursday, May 14**, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the **Indiana Convention Assembly 2026 Center in Indianapolis.**

In a demanding world that leaves many feeling stretched thin, this retreat offers a dedicated sanctuary—a haven to pause, truly rest, reflect on our current pace, and prayerfully consider how to move forward differently. This profound journey will nurture your mind, body, and spirit through a beautiful blend of spiritual formation and healing arts, guided by the wisdom of **Rev. Dr. Dionne Boissière.**



UWF 2025 Prayer Calendar

Tuesday, December 31

Your Gifts at Work:

Funds support Grassroots International programs that improve the social-political and economic situation of rural women in the Gaza Strip by promoting women's leadership and gender equality through trainings on agroecology, food sovereignty, gender and climate justice, income generation, and empowerment for women.

Lectionary Reading

Kings 3:5–14

John 8:12–19