



United
Women
in Faith

NORTHERN VIRGINIA DISTRICT

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

NOVA NOTES

MAY 2025

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.

SPOTLIGHT ON....

In Memory of all our *Sisters* who have made our UMW/UWF units so special.

I have been mentored by two special Sisters in Faith since the 1990s. Mentorship is so personal and special. To be called is an honor and a challenge to be true to our organization/our church...not to be taken lightly. My mentors were both Shirleys...Held and Dolfi; very respected and relied upon at our church. I knew nothing of the Methodist Church or its Women's ministries. My friends not only educated me and watched over me but my family. A great commitment of time, energy and love.

So began a 35 year journey.

My angelic Shirleys made sure I participated in the life of our church from committee service to UMW/UWF executive committee and District service. Their devotion was to answer the call of the needy. From meal and soup making to clothing those in need, to feeding the District ministers when their meetings were at our church. Our homes and car trunks were always filled with someone's most recent 'good condition' discards including medical equipment; available to those who called.

Not only did these ladies encourage all our members but took pride in making sure that the response was part of every gathering; quick Bible studies, to reviews of monthly articles and where we could get involved..Outreach! Ms. Dolfi took care of our kitchen facilities, while Ms. Held made sure we had refreshments for all and a door prize or two for our meetings. When Shirley Dolfi passed away it took over 12 women to do all she did. When Shirley Held could no longer chair our Spirit Catchers, a senior group, it disappeared within the year. She had facilitated this senior program for over 13 years.

They reminded us of the necessity of the 5 Channels of Giving encouraging us to give. For many years we donated monthly to the World Thanks Offering giving a nickel for every pound we needed to lose or a quarter for meals eaten out. Small contributions that added up to helping others. From preparing HeadStart Preschool classroom at the start of the new year to collecting special funds for **Rising Hope**, they were always behind us

encouraging us to participate more. And our annual fundraisers to a village but my Shirleys were always front and center.



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And as I say goodbye to Shirley Held and Shirley Dolfi, I cry tears of joys for God's love in giving us these Sister Saints who exemplified Women in Action.

~Myrna



Brendsa Romenius and others participated in the "Faithful Witness - Calling to Congressional Leaders to Show Moral Courage" on Capitol Hill. Sally Vonner, General Secretary and CEO of United Women in Faith was a leading speaker. Faithful Witness -- Sally Vonner and NOVA UWF

On April 16, the General Board of Church and Society and Sojourners hosted an ecumenical Prayer Vigil at Capitol Hill of "**Faithful Witness - A Call for Congressional Courage.**" Sally Vonner, General Secretary and CEO of United Women in Faith, led the prayer vigil speakers. She spoke to the 150-year old history of Methodist women who have stood up for the needs of women and children. Sally said, "Long before 'hashtags' the United Women in Faith have been supporting those vulnerable for the basic needs of food, health and safety." She noted the 90 missions that are supported in the US by the UWF, and others in the world. She asserted that the United Women in Faith will still be fighting to meet these most important basic needs of food, health, safety for women and children in our communities, country and the world. She noted there are 40+ million people in our country who are living with food insecurity, and 7 million of them are children.

NOVA District members were among 100 people present for the prayer vigil, while many watched on-line. Elizabeth Lee (UWF director of mobilization and advocacy), Marlene Dakita, Karen McElfish (UWF president, VA Conference), Sally Vonner, Doris Douglas, Brenda Romenius, Janet Oakes and Sue Gunter called our legislators to set aside partisan politics and address the needs of people in our country and the world.



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****April 30, 2025- Last Wednesday of April-** Faithful Witness Wednesdays -- April 23 and April 30 Capitol Hill at noon, Join many faith partners in prayer, urging our members of Congress to act with moral courage. **[Join us for Faithful Witness Wednesdays - April 2025](https://act.sojo.net/page/79871/survey/1?ea.tracking.id=event&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_term=united-church-of-christ&utm_content=5922526c-41c4-4a25-8b70-e04f8bde80b1&utm_campaign=social-media)** (https://act.sojo.net/page/79871/survey/1?ea.tracking.id=event&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_term=united-church-of-christ&utm_content=5922526c-41c4-4a25-8b70-e04f8bde80b1&utm_campaign=social-media)

Micah 6:8 "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"

NOVA UWF sisters –

This **Thursday, April 30**, will be the final “Faithful Witness” prayer vigil and assembly to call on legislators to stand up against actions that are causing harm to the most vulnerable in our communities and our nation, particularly as they affect children, youth and women. Many programs such as SNAP, Head Start, and Medicaid are facing cuts, and in some cases elimination. We will gather at the United Methodist Church building, 100 Maryland Ave NE, Washington, DC at 11:30 am, and assemble by the US Capitol at Noon.

****Information and registration are shown in the message following.
Please share this information with your units.**

We are standing together, people of all faith backgrounds, to demand that Congress act with courage to stop executive overreach. A coalition of [29 organizations](#) from The Washington Interfaith Staff Community (WISC) have co-organized multi-faith vigils call on Congress to exercise greater moral courage in upholding its Article 1 powers as a co-equal branch of government.

[April 30 RSVP](https://act.sojo.net/page/82039/survey/1?ea.tracking.id=email) (<https://act.sojo.net/page/82039/survey/1?ea.tracking.id=email>) and to be added to the Sojourners mailing list for information and future updates

 The livestream will be broadcast **[on YouTube](#)** and available post-event for viewing



MARCH 2025

May 2025

Intergenerational relationships – however they come to be – are vital to nurture. ~ Nora Weiss, Marketing and Communications Manager, Atlantic Street Center, Seattle, Washington, USA

May 7 – Dear God, thank you for instilling in the hearts of all people the desire to seek you. You have said that unless we become like children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. May the children entrusted to our care grow with home for your kingdom. Amen. Gwanchui Jeong, Global Mission Fellows – International from South Korea serving in Cambodia

May 14 – Loving and gracious God, there is so much need for healing in this world – healing of body, mind, and spirit; healing of relationships; healing of our divided country. Help us to be the hands and feet of Jesus, loving and accepting others as Jesus would have us do. Amen. Jana Marie Whitten, Order of Deaconess and Home Missioner, St. John’s UMC, Dover, New Hampshire

May 21 – Gracious God, we thank you for children and youth and their infectious love for you. May their examples of faith, joy, and love be always in our hearts. Roberta Bragan, Order of Deaconess and Home Missioner, New England Conference, Methuen, Massachusetts

May 28 - Gracious God, who is faithful from generation to generation, open our senses that we may encounter your grace in the souls we meet. In the name of Jesus Christ, who reveals your love to us. Amen. Gary B. MacDonald, Stewardship and Advancement Manager, Murphy-Harpst Children’s Home, Cedartown, Georgia

**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:

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

Friday, May 2, 4 p.m., Depart: Sunday, May 4, 2 p.m.

Massanetta Springs Conference Center in Harrisonburg, VA

<https://massanettasprings.org/>

Registration closed March 18. For information and questions regarding this event: vauwf.org

Contact Virginia Ellis VAUWF Spiritual; Life Coordinator vauwfsfg@gmail.com

The sessions will not be online however, the 4 sessions with the retreat leader will be recorded and available to view after the May 2-4 retreat.



Environmental Justice Now Shows are Back!

After being on pause the last few months, we are excited to announce that our *Environmental Justice Now Shows* are back! [Watch the most recent episode](https://vaip.org/ejn/) on Facebook. <https://vaip.org/ejn/>

Environmental Justice Now!

Check out our weekly live stream on **Fridays at 12:00 p.m. EST**, in which we discuss various environmental justice news, events, and communities in the state of Virginia.

Podcasts & Webinars (click on title under image):



[Faith Talks](#)



[Voices From the Field](#)



[Just Energy for All](#)

Make an Impact

International Day to End Corporal Punishment of Children

It's time!
April 30, 2025
1:00-3:00 EDT • 12:00-2:00 pm CDT

Children First
IDRA Transforming Education
Texas Appleseed
The Leadership Conference
40 Years
IVAT
U.S. ALLIANCE TO END THE PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN
DIGNITY IN SCHOOLS CAMPAIGN
NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER
Fed SDC
JUSTICE POLICY INSTITUTE
edtrust
LIVES IN THE BALANCE
RACIAL JUSTICE NOW!
United Women in Faith
Advocating Kids, Inc.
National Institute for the Prevention of Corporal Punishment
P.O.P.E.

International Day to End Corporal Punishment: Acting Together to End State-Sanctioned Violence in Schools
April 30, 2025
1PM-3PM ET | 10AM-12PM PT

Please note: This is a partner-led event and registration is hosted by IDRA, not by United Women in Faith.

Ending violence against students is a critical part of the movement to create safer, more just schools and communities. Join us for a powerful and action-focused webinar on International Day to End Corporal Punishment. Advocates and experts will discuss strategies to eliminate corporal punishment in schools using data, messaging and strategic policy advocacy. Together we will identify concrete ways we can all take action to protect children’s rights.

[Register Here](#)

https://secure.everyaction.com/5XaZHfGK70Cg26-sWSxddQ2?mc_cid=e20308b8b8&mc_eid=42e341edfd



Our #1 Job

The first commandment from our Creator was to “tend the garden. “The task of caring for creation may seem daunting, but especially when we do it together, we discover God in new ways.

May 2025

*The Bible reminds us, “*God saw everything God had made and indeed, it was very good*” (Genesis 1:31), and **humanity’s number one job** was to tend and care for the garden God gave us (Genesis 2:15). The same is true today. Find your “garden” to care for Earth.

***Plant plants that naturally grow in your area.** Native plants require less water than lawns or annuals, help prevent erosion, and do not need fertilizers. They reduce air pollution and increase shelter and food for pollinators and birds. For suggestions, find a Master Gardener in your community or search for “plants native to Virginia.”

***How much land does your church have?** One church on a hill turned their sunny lawn into a garden that feeds 20 families identified by local schools as food insecure. Another church raised 30,000 pounds of organic produce in one year to give away to local non-profits. Yet another one added native plants, porous pavers, and a rain garden, making a beautiful entryway to welcome people and rainwater.

***Engage children in nature activities.** Grow something together, like a flower, tomato plant, cucumber, or pumpkin vine. Plant seeds outdoors or indoors, using cups or pots. Talk about the delight in God’s creation you feel. As you work together, you’ll foster a new generation that loves and cares for nature.

***Does your church have a pizza garden?** Invite children and youth to help plant, tend, and harvest tomatoes, peppers, onions, and herbs. When ready, hold a homemade pizza party and offer a blessing to connect the experience with God, the source of all growth. Feel with the younger ones the joy of growing and sharing fresh produce.

*Install rain barrels to collect runoff from your gutters and **use the stored water** for your garden. Many local governments offer affordable rain barrels. Also, instead of pouring old pet water down the drain, use it to water plants, benefiting houseplants, garden plants, and trees.

***Plant for pollinators—plant for our future.** Butterflies, bees, and birds are essential for the growth of food for humans, but pollinators face extinction due to habitat destruction and pesticide use. Planting even a small patch can support their survival.

*Food waste—both corporate and personal—is **the #3 cause of greenhouse gas.** Composting food scraps allows you to fill the land with nutrients and avoid the landfill. **Explore your options for composting:** industrial composting services, backyard bins, and networks of friends contributing to a common composter.

***Shop locally at a farmers market or community garden and** reduce the carbon emissions that come from shipping food long distances. Eat sustainably with more fruits and veggies and reduce the cost to your body. Give thanks for those whose work feeds you and others.

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.uwfaith.org/assembly) to learn more!

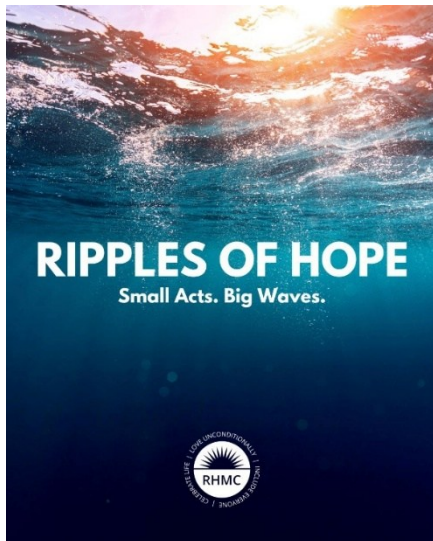


Save the Dates!

Mini Mission July 12 with Dr Jason Stanley. Registration at 9am & program begins at 9:30am.

Mission U this year is "*Practicing Hope Together*" **July 25-27 Good Shepard UMC** 9155 Hungary Rd, Henrico, VA 23294 in Richmond and over Zoom <https://www.vauwf.org/missionu>

Registration details coming soon -- plan to attend! Financial aid is available.



[Rising Hope Mission Church](#)

Check out our April edition of Ripples of Hope!

Each month, Ripples of Hope brings you powerful stories, community updates, and ways to get involved, all designed to spread hope further.

Like a single drop in the water, small acts of kindness have a rippling effect

that creates waves that reach far and wide.

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

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.

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.

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



Also, Rising Hope currently needs dried beans, canned beans, diced tomatoes, coffee, & coffee creamer for their ongoing operations. Do you have a sleeping bag that needs a new home?