



United  
Women  
in Faith

# NORTHERN VIRGINIA DISTRICT

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

### NOVA NOTES



#### 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.



You are warmly invited to attend the **NoVa District Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 4, 2025, at Friendship United Methodist Church** at 3527 Gallows Road, Falls Church, VA 22042.

The service/meeting will run from **9:30 AM to 12:00 PM, with fellowship beginning at 9:00 AM.**

Please see the attached flyer for full details.

This gathering will be a beautiful opportunity to reconnect with one another, revisit the heart of our mission, and look ahead with hope and purpose. Whether you're a long-time member or newly joined our journey, your presence will enrich our time together. We look forward to welcoming you with open hearts and joyful spirits. Please feel free to share & forward the flyer and invitation.

Northern Virginia District United Women in Faith Annual Meeting

## ***“CARRYING OUR FAITH FORWARD”***

**Saturday, October 4, 2025**

Friendship United Methodist Church  
3527 Gallows Rd, Falls Church, VA 22042

9:30am - Noon (Fellowship beginning at 9:00am)

(Worship Service followed by our Annual Business Meeting)

**SPEAKER: Doris Douglass**

**Past Arlington District President**

***Mission in Motion: Witnessing God's Work in Cuba***

**An offering for United Women in Faith Missions will be taken at the meeting. Meeting streamed live**  
[Friendshipchurch@nova.org](mailto:Friendshipchurch@nova.org)

**Sydenstricker UWF** will be holding their **2025-26 Kick-Off**. If you do not have a home United Women in Faith unit and would like to join an active UWF unit, please consider joining our group. The Kick-Off is Sunday, **October 5** at 12:15pm in Hottel Hall. We will have a soup lunch before our meeting begins.



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For more information or wish to attend, please reach out to Myrna Meling at [mpmeling@hotmail.com](mailto:mpmeling@hotmail.com)



### **October 07**

#### **United Women in Faith Digital Open House (October)**

Tuesday · 8:00pm - 9:00pm EDT

Livestream

#### **[RSVP](#)**

( <https://uwfaith.mn.co/events/united-women-in-faith-digital-open-house-october> )

Join us as we welcome you to this digital space, sharing more about why we are stepping into these digital waters and some of the tips, tricks, and best practices that you can use when you're swimming around.

This will be a space to answer any questions you have and will ensure that you walk away feeling confident about how and why you can use this space.

### **November 06**

#### **United Women in Faith Digital Open House (November)**

Thursday · 8:00pm - 9:00pm EST

Livestream

Join us for an overview of United Women in Faith Digital, our private space for content and community.

In this one-hour Zoom, we'll share:

- How and why we chose this platform for our members
- How to set up your profile and get connected, step by step
- Resources and opportunities you won't want to miss

We'll also have plenty of time for questions!

You'll walk away feeling confident and equipped about how and why to use United Women in Faith Digital.

Note that registration on Zoom is required. Feel free to share this information widely.

**[Click here to register in advance for this November meeting.](#)**



## Mid-week prayers from the 2025 UWF Prayer Calendar

### October 2025

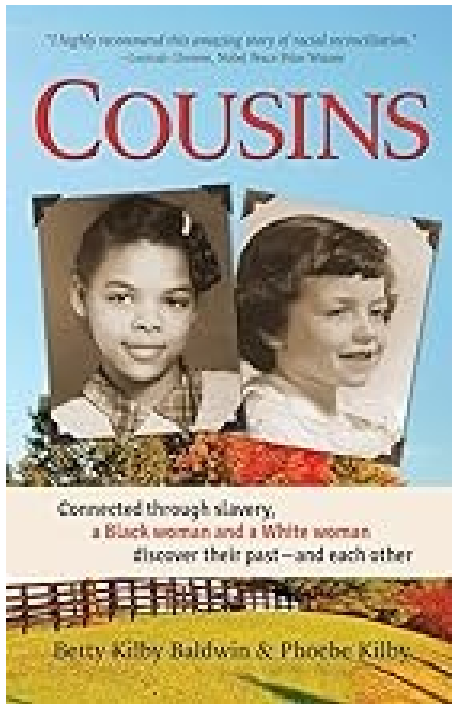
*May God open our eyes to see, ears to hear, and our hearts to act with love for the inclusiveness of everyone. Giving space to each generation is key as we work together.* ~ Frieda Mwebe Mofya, United Women in Faith Regional Missionary, Africa

**September 3** – *Lord God, be with teacher of students as they show love, compassion, and service to their students. Make them wise as to how to show your love and mercy so that they can see you in their teachers.* ~ Connie Pilkington, Order of Deaconess & Home Missioner, Southwestern City Schools, Gove City, Ohio

**September 10** – *May we support and give hope to families across generations to feel empowered and thrive. Let there be no generational divide as we love and care for those who come before us and are born after us.* ~ Nora Weiss, Marketing & Communications, Atlantic Street Center, Seattle, Washington

**September 17** – *Lord of unity, uniqueness, and beauty amidst diversity may we all walk in your obedience with joy to your loving presence. Amen.* ~ Rose Anne Velasco-Cayabyab, Deaconess & United Women in Faith Scholarship Recipient, Nueva Ecija, Philippines

**September 24** – *I am grateful for God's immense goodness and all of God's help on this path, guiding and growing together with the community. I ask God for wisdom to continue working and the strength necessary to continue carrying God's message of love and faith.* ~ Yeferson Collo Perdomo, Global Mission Fellows – International from Colombia serving in Argentina



– “**Breaking Down the Walls: Reaching Across the Racial Divide**”  
Betty Kilby Baldwin and Phoebe Kilby, authors of *Cousins: Connected through Slavery, a Black woman and a White woman discover their past – and each other* will give a presentation on **Saturday, October 11 from 1 - 3 PM** at Laurel Ridge Community College, 173 Skirmisher Lane, Middletown, VA 22645. This program is co-sponsored by Laurel Ridge Community College and UWFaith Shenandoah River District, United Methodist Church. Their book “*Cousins:...*” is featured on the UWFaith Reading Program List for Social Action.

Betty and Phoebe will talk about their discovery of each other, family histories and their experiences at the center of civil rights changes brought about in Virginia and our country in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. **A book signing will follow their presentation.**

Hybrid and in-person options will be available with Registration. Registration is FREE with possible donation options (tba) for The Kilby

Family Endowed Scholarship Fund.

Questions? Contact: Laura Douglass, Social Action Chair, UWF SRD Email: [LauraDouglass@vaumc.org](mailto:LauraDouglass@vaumc.org)

### Podcasts & Webinars (click on title under image):



[Faith Talks](#)



[Voices From the Field](#)



[Just Energy for All](#)

- **Faith Talks: Observing the Children's Sabbath** (September 18, 2025 recording)  
<https://uwfaith.mn.co/posts/faith-talks-faith-talks-observing-the-childrens-sabbath-september-18-2025>
- **Voices From the Field- Sep 23** Voices from the Field: Turning Uncertainty into Hope: How National Mission Institutions Rise to Meet Federal Policy Impacts



The opening book of the Bible reminds us, “God saw everything God had made and indeed, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31). The first commandment given to humanity is to tend and care for the garden God gave us (Genesis 2:15). Regenerative agriculture practices are proven ways to do so.

Click to open:

[:View this email for complete article in your browser](#)

### **SOCIAL ACTION: CLIMATE JUSTICE**

\***Purchase organic food.** The few extra cents you pay at the grocery support farmers who avoid using the synthetic pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers that have been proven to deplete the soil. Organic farmers also refuse to subject their livestock to antibiotics and growth hormones. Organic farming practices are healthier for soil, livestock, and for those who eat the food.

\***Reap the harvest. Shop for food locally at farmers markets.** See and give thanks for those whose work feeds you and others. Care for the planet by reducing the carbon emissions that come from shipping food long distances. Eat more fruits & veggies and reduce the high cost to your body & the planet from many other foods.

\*Most actions taken on behalf of God’s creation are helpful, but some have more impact than others. One of the biggest categories is food. **Become aware of food waste and reduce it,** take up composting, choose less or no meat, buy locally and in season. Everyone needs to eat; everyone can contribute to caring for Earth.

\*Some **food-waste issues** are systemic, but many come down to things individuals and families can do: Plan meals, buy local, buy less, buy in-season, buy organic, store appropriately, use the freezer, reduce meat consumption, grow veggies, eat leftovers, make soup and smoothies, compost peelings and ends, share with others. Eat happily, knowing you are helping us all.

\***Compost food waste and more** (leaves, shredded paper, pet fur, coffee filters). Twenty to 45% of landfill is organic and creates methane gas, which contributes to global warming. Instead, compost, which is nature’s way to regenerate and nourish the soil. Browse for easy and effective options: backyard bin, indoor machine, commercial pick up, sharing a service with a neighbor.



**DONATIONS TO THE CHRISTMAS GIFT MINISTRY  
FOR THE FLUVANNA CORRECTIONAL CENTER FOR WOMEN  
ARE DUE BY **NOVEMBER 1, 2025****

**DONATIONS TO THE CHRISTMAS GIFT MINISTRY  
FOR THE FLUVANNA CORRECTIONAL CENTER FOR WOMEN  
ARE DUE BY NOVEMBER 1, 2025**

**Donations may be dropped off at St. John's UMC,  
5312 Backlick Road, Springfield, VA  
Monday – Thursday, 10 AM – 3 PM**

This ministry – sponsored by GraceInside, Virginia's Prison Chaplain Service – was established in 1998, and is supported entirely by donations from individuals, churches, and organizations throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia and beyond. Each inmate at the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women receives the gifts listed below.

Here's a complete list of the approved donations. **Please note that the correctional center does not permit ANY substitute or additional items.**

**Hygiene Items (place in a gallon zip lock bag)**

1. One individually wrapped toothbrush (must be in the original container). **Battery-operated toothbrushes are NOT permitted.**
2. One tube of toothpaste, 6 oz. (must be in the original container).
3. One deodorant stick, 2.6 oz. - no spray or roll-on (as close to 2.6 oz. as possible but no larger)
4. One bottle of shampoo, 8 oz.-15 oz. (as close as possible to 15 oz.)
5. One bottle of lotion, 8 oz.-15 oz. (as close as possible to 15 oz.)

**Greeting Cards and Stationery Items**

1. Christmas cards and greeting cards for all occasions (no aluminum foil on the card or envelope flap)
2. Stationery items – writing paper (tablets 3 1/2 x 9 preferred)

**PLEASE, no postage stamps, pencils and envelopes are needed at this time.**

**Money Contributions.** For donors who wish to contribute money, please make your check payable to NOVA District UWF and write "FCCW Resource Fund" in the Memo section. Your donation will be forwarded to GraceInside and used to purchase any shortage of Christmas gift items and to support inmates in other ways, such as providing classroom materials and worship supplies; or paying travel expenses for funeral or deathbed visits. Checks may be mailed to Marty Bickford, 3561 Martha Custis Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302-2003. Please contact her if you have any questions at [martybickford121@outlook.com](mailto:martybickford121@outlook.com) or 703-731-7992.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and support.



## [Call to 53rd Annual Meeting](#)

### **VIRGINIA CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH CALL TO THE 53rd ANNUAL MEETING**

**You are invited to the 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Virginia Conference United Women in Faith, **October 25, 2025, at 2PM** at Trinity UMC, 903 Forest Avenue, Richmond, VA 23229. District Superintendent Rev. Lindsey Baynham Freeman is the guest speaker.**

A booklet will be available for you to download which will include the agenda, calendar, budget, nominations, reports, and other useful information.

Come help celebrate the work of the Virginia Conference this year, the 156<sup>th</sup> year of United Women in Faith and her predecessor organizations.

Karen McElfish  
[President](#)

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#### **Virginia Conference United Women in Faith Proposed Slate of Officers for 2026**

The Committee on Nominations presents the following for nomination:

Treasurer..... Martha (Marty) Bickford  
Program Resources Coordinator..... Linda Porter

#### Committee on Nominations:

Class of 2029..... Penny Kelly  
Class of 2029..... Barbara Phillips  
Class of 2029..... Annita Nelson

**The Link · September 24, 2025**

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**Spotlight on UWF member Brenda Romenius,  
2025 Nominations Chair, NOVA District**

Like most people, I am always at a loss to tell people about myself. I was born in Washington, DC and have lived in Northern VA all my life. My parents had 6 children, and I am the oldest. I am married to my husband Bill Romenius.

We will celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary in November. I have two adult children and four grandchildren ranging from 2 ½ to 18 years old.

I became involved in United Methodist Women at St. John’s UMC about 35 years ago, during the period of my life when I was divorced. The women were wonderful in embracing me into the sisterhood, and shortly after I started being more involved in their activities and eventually serving on committees. These wonderful women emphasized fellowship, faith, and a heart for mission to help people in need – I was inspired to be in their presence and the things that they held dear as UMW members. Since then I have served in many positions in my unit and the NOVA District.

During one of the St. John’s Prayer and Self-Denial Breakfasts, Deaconess Pat Marks gave a presentation on her work in women’s prison ministry. She emphasized the needs of women who are incarcerated – not just the basic hygiene kits, but also maintaining connections with their families, and the spiritual fulfillment that many sought. She spoke about the service of Deaconesses in the UMC and their emphasis on love, justice and service. I felt something stir within me and after Pat’s presentation I asked her about deaconesses and their role in the UMC.

Not long after talking to Pat, I retired from an aerospace company and pursued the training to become a deaconess. I was commissioned as a deaconess in 2012 at General Conference in Tampa, FL. Though I retired as a deaconess in 2017, we still vow to “serve still.” The call of “Love, Justice and Service” by the Order of Deaconess and Home Missioners is dear to my heart. My favorite verse is Micah 6:8 – “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” I believe that of all the verses we apply to our lives, Micah 6:8 speaks to our commitment to God and all of his children.

Pat had a saying, that I loved and close this note to all of you wonderful United Women in Faith sisters: Remember that God is smiling about you! And He is 😊



**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

### **Stacey Abrams, Workshops, Soul Care, Town Halls, and More on Schedule**

**Stacey Abrams**—politician, lawyer, activist, and writer—has officially signed on as a keynote speaker. Abrams is best known for her work involving voting accessibility and turnout. She made history by becoming the first woman and first African American woman to hold positions in state and national politics. Abrams will be joined on stage by her mother, the Rev. Carolyn Abrams, retired United Methodist clergy.

#### **Stay Tuned**

Assembly 2026 leaders and plans continue developing daily, so be sure to visit <https://assembly.uwfaith.org/website/82390/> to register early and stay up to date on the latest news.

**UWFaith Calendar: October is...  
Domestic Violence, Breast Cancer Awareness Month**



**May God open our eyes to see, ears to hear, and our hearts to act with love for the inclusiveness of everyone. Giving space to each generation is key as we work together.**

—FRIEDA MWEBE MOFYA,  
UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH REGIONAL MISSIONARY, AFRICA