# PASS IT ON WITH PURPOSE

## Spring 2026

**Shenandoah River District United Women in Faith**

United Women in Faith

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## SAVE THE DATE

**May 15-17** – UWF National Assembly, Indianapolis, IN

**May 21** – Evening Together (All District Units) 7 pm, Asbury UMC, Harrisonburg

**June 6** – UWF Day at Ferrum College, Ferrum, VA

**June 17-20** – VA UMC Annual Conference, JMU, Harrisonburg

**June 19** – District UWF/UMM Breakfast, 7 am, Dayton UMC, Dayton

**June 25** – 2nd Qtr. Remittances due to District Treasurer

**July 2** – District Exec. Committee Meeting, 7 pm – Zoom

**July 9** – Newsletter deadline (forms to be included)

**July 24-26** – Conference Mission U, New Creation UMC, Chesapeake, VA

**Aug. 10** – Rainbow Giver forms and money due to District Treasurer

**Aug. 15** – August Fun Gathering, 11am-1:30 pm, Shenandoah Co. Park, Maurertown

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Have you ever had one of those days or weeks (or even longer) when everything is so jammed packed that there's hardly time to catch your breath? Life can get busy. But sometimes life can get so busy that the "urgent" crowds out the important. It's at times like that when we need most to not just slow down but just plain stop -- even if it's in the middle of something -- stop and give thanks to the one who is the source of your strength and energy. We all need a reminder to do this. Below is mine. (It's been on my refrigerator for nearly 10 years!)

"Stress causes your thoughts to zoom around and around like race cars on a track. They roar so fast and loud that it's hard to hear My quiet, gentle voice. Ask the Holy Spirit to calm your mind so you can hear Me. Remember, I am the Prince of Peace, and I am with you all the time. I am also in control of everything that happens to you. There is nothing that you and I can't handle together. And while I don't create bad things, I can turn them around and use them for good. This is how I heal the hurts you go through." --*Jesus Today for Kids*, by Sarah Young, pg. 104

Only when you stop, rest, and be renewed in both body and spirit can you keep on keeping on.

Love and prayers,

**Mary Preston**
**District President**
Email: K4LJH@comcast.net
Home: 540-338-4152

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## FROM THE CO-VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)

The first piece of information for this article comes from *Response* magazine. It highlights Mary Magdalene – a woman whose life has been the subject of many theories, not all of them flattering. Yet what stands out most is her unwavering devotion as a follower of Jesus.

During Holy Week, many of us heard her story again. She was present at the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and was among the first to witness the empty tomb. Her faithfulness never wavered.

Like Mary, many of you are living examples of courage and bravery. When others were afraid and fled, she remained steadfast in her commitment to serve her Lord. Her example inspires me to say to each of you: proclaim the Good News! Whether it is through working on projects within your units, supporting church activities, or serving in your communities, all are meaningful acts of servanthood. Please know how deeply you are appreciated for all that you do.

One important way we grow in our ability to serve is through reading. I encourage you to make use of your local and church libraries, join a book club, or share insights with one another. The current UWF Reading Program list is a valuable resource to guide your learning and reflection.

Please remember that our **"Evening Together" will be held on May 21st at 7 pm at Asbury UMC in Harrisonburg.** Our speaker, Jeff Wilhelm, Director of HOPE Distributed, will share how this outreach ministry is meeting the needs of many in our district. It promises to be a meaningful time of learning, fellowship, and encouragement.

Looking ahead, our annual **UMC Conference will take place at the Atlantic Union Bank Center on the campus of James Madison University from June 17-20.** This is always a time filled with planning, excitement, and the anticipation of blessings to come!

Additionally, the **District UWF/UMM will host a Breakfast on June 19th at 7:00 am in the Dayton UMC Social Hall.** We are pleased to welcome Jeremy Harold, a Harrisonburg Creation Care Specialist, as our speaker. This will be another wonderful opportunity to gather, share, and learn together.

Future possibilities to attend:

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|---|---|
| July 24-25 | Mission U – New Creation UMC, Chesapeake |
| May 15-17 | UWF Natonal Assembly, Indianapolis, IN |
| Aug. 15 | Fun Gathering - Shenandoah Co. Park |
| Sept. 12 | Prayer Breakfast - Mtn. Valley UMC |

As Mary led others, may we find ways to guide each other into the future, as we share our gifts and talents, as others have done in the past. Ordinary women with extraordinary possibilities.

Blessings to each of you,

**Barbara Phillips, District Co-Vice President (SOUTH)**
Email: grammybp@gmail.com
Cell: 540-383-9972

## FROM THE TREASURER

Greetings,

1st Quarter reporting for the United Women in Faith

Ladies, thank you all for sending in your remittances for the first quarter of 2026. We have achieved 26% of the budgeted amount for pledge to missions of $40,000 for the year 2026. The total amount remitted to our conference treasurer was $16,366.84. Without your commitment we would not have been able to send that amount off. Included in that amount was:

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|---|---|
| Pledge to Missions | $10,239.25 |
| Candle Burning | 1,756.45 |
| SMR | 80.00 |
| Gift to Mission | 120.00 |
| Gift in Memory | 110.00 |
| World Thank Offering | 701.86 |
| Call to Prayer & Self-Denial | 1,492.50 |
| National Projects | 650.00 |
| Virginia Projects | 637.50 |
| Legacy Fund | 579.28 |

The balance in our A&MD is $5,734.77.

We had a very successful prayer breakfast for the North; thanks to Braddock St. for the use of their facility. Total raised was $2,219.

Please keep up the good work; looking forward to the 2nd quarter remittances. Please remember to add your unit's name to your remittance form.

**Patti Brown, District Treasurer**
Email: pbrown8291@gmail.com
Cell: 315-415-4803

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## NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

There are two vacant positions on the District UWF Executive Committee. Please prayerfully consider serving as **Co-Vice President (NORTH)** or a member of the **Nominations Committee**. United Women in Faith work together as a Sisterhood of Grace.

**Debbie Creech**
**Chair, Nominations Committee**
Email: debbiecreech@vaumc.org
Cell: 617-285-1312

## SOCIAL ACTION

### Focus on Creation Justice

**Education:** Love in a Time of Climate Change: Honoring Creation, Establishing Justice, revised edition, by Sharon Delgado addresses the climate crisis as a theologian, climate activist, and bridge builder to authentic relationship with nature and each other. Plans are in process to offer a book study via Zoom in the fall. The book is available as an audio book or ebook, and in print through booksellers such as Bookshop.org, or direct from the publisher, Fortress Press. The book review is at https://umcreationjustice.org/love-in-a-time-of-climate-change-a-review/.

**Resources:** By going to uwfaith.org/action (https://uwfaithresources.org/searchresults.cfm?searchText=JE4A), one can find the following download resources:

- Energy and Water Efficiency Checklist for Worship Facilities
- Climate Justice: Just Energy 4 All
- I Cry Aloud to God: a Service of Lament and Hope in the Face of Climate Crisis: a Bible study on Psalm 77
- Introduction to 13 Steps to Sustainability
- Getting Started in Creating Sustainable Events

**Save the Date: Friday, June 19, 2026 at 7 AM – Annual Conference Breakfast, "Caring for God's Creation"** with guest speaker, Jeremy Harold, Harrisonburg's Green Space Manager, sponsored by Virginia United Women in Faith & United Methodist Men at Dayton UMC, 215 Ashby Street, Dayton, VA. Jeremy and the Harrisonburg Public Works team have won prestigious awards for their work with Urban Forestry and the Pollinator Project https://www.nrpa.org/blog/the-buzz-in-the-burg/.

All are invited to attend the breakfast buffet. Cost is $18 collected at the door and registration is required. Contact Laura Douglass at Douglass.laura.b@gmail.com to register by June 12.

**Laura Douglass**
**District Social Action Coordinator**
Email: lauradouglass@vaumc.org
Cell: 540-271-1558

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH

No matter the struggles we face, as long as we keep moving forward along the path, we cannot stray nor escape God's presence, power, love, promise, and guidance. We can find comfort in knowing that we are never alone. Kelli Williams, Daily Prayer Guide, April 2026.

I first met Robin Hoerber, the Spiritual Growth Representative for the Three Notch'd District in April 2025 at the Conference Spiritual Growth Retreat. Being blind and a recent widow Robin is very inspirational. She generously shares her newsletter articles with all the Spiritual Growth leaders across the Conference. She recently shared these scriptures that give her strength and comfort. With her permission, I am sharing her article. I hope you will find it as spiritually encouraging as I do. Thank you, Robin.

Nowadays, conversation is often wrought with worry due to inflation, famine, war, disease, corruption in leaders, and the lack of financial and natural resources. God's love and provision are questioned.

Amidst all the uncertainty God speaks to us the following encouragement through his word.

In Psalm 103:1-13, God says that he will forgive all of our sins, heal our diseases, redeem our life, crown us with steadfast love and mercy, and satisfy us with good as long as we live. He "abounds in steadfast love."

**God's protection is sure.**

In Psalm 91:4, we read, "He will cover you with his pinions and under his wings you will find refuge. His faithfulness is a shield and buckler."

**God intentionally plans for our future.**

In Jeremiah 29:11 we read, "Surely I know the plans I have for you says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

In Zephaniah 3:17, we read, "The Lord God is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will renew you in his love."

Matthew 6:26 tells us God will provide for all of our needs.

"Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

**God urges us to turn to Him when we are faced with our times of joy as well as times of sorrow and affliction.**

In 2 Corinthians chapter 1, Paul writes, “The Father of mercies and the God of all consolation consoles us in our affliction” so that we may have comfort and hope.

Our heavenly Father wants his children to bring their requests to him along with their praises and thanksgiving.

Paul writes to the Philippians:
“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7)

In verse 19, Paul continues:
“And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

So, my dear friends take heart and rely on our Lord whose way is sure. Pray for guidance, for the Lord will hear and guide you.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

“If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own son but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?”
(Romans 8:31-32).

In His Service,
Robin Hoerber, Spiritual Growth Representative

**Rita Biggs**
**District Spiritual Growth Coordinator**
Email: Biggs40@gmail.com
Cell: 540-749-2278

**Help me, Lord, to remember that religion is not to be confined to the church... nor exercised only in prayer and meditation, but that everywhere I am in Thy Presence.**

**Susanna Wesley**

## HISTORIAN'S CORNER

**Missionary Societies of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church**

The **Woman's Parent Mite Missionary Society** was founded in May 1874 at the request of church bishops, mainly from the northern states. The women used "mite boxes" to collect small donations from members to fund church projects and overseas missions. Haiti, a church mission since 1824, became a major emphasis. Other countries included South America and West Africa.

In 1893, a second women's missionary society was formed - **Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society**. It spread rapidly throughout the southern states, promoting and supporting church development in South Africa. In 1912, both organizations petitioned the General Conference to allow them representation on the Missionary Board for support as an "official organ of the Women's Missionary Society." This request was granted as well as a page (edited by a woman) in their denominational publication, The Voice of Missions.

The 1944 General Conference passed legislation that combined the two societies into the **Women's Missionary Society**. Lucy Hughes was chosen president. BUT, they continued to be an auxiliary to the AME Department of Missions.

At the 1972 General Conference 5 programs were recognized:

1) Effort to teach, train, and develop local leaders
2) Fight sickle cell anemia
3) Support AME church schools
4) Fund homes for the aged
5) Scholarship and loans for college or trade school.

Additionally, the need to give former mission fields autonomy in their church administration. Those ideas were confirmed in 1975.

In 1987, the African Methodist Episcopal Church celebrated 200 years as a Wesleyan movement and began a 3rd century of ministry and mission.

**Janice Webb**
**District Historian (NORTH)**
Email: webbjshw@verizon.net
Home: 703-777-3116

**Someone has commented, *"He who carries a lantern on a dark road at night sees only one step ahead. When he takes that one, the lamp moves forward and another is made plain. He finally reaches his destination in safety without once walking in darkness. All the way is lighted, but only a single step at a time. This is the method of God's guidance."***

**Excerpted from history written during the Centennial Celebration of the Women's Missionary Society.**

## EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION

Greetings,

As I worked on a program for our revised "Living into our Purpose" form, I thought about the Mission Study - Women United for Change: 150 Years in Mission. It has now been 157 years since 8 women met in Boston on that cold and stormy night of March 23, 1869. The rest is our history, from Women's Foreign Missionary Society to our present United Women in Faith. Although the name has experienced many changes, our mission and purpose remain the same.

I am always inspired by the stories and the work of the early WFMS as well as the lives of my paternal grandmother, aunts, and all the United Methodist Women I grew up with in my church. I have also been blessed to have wonderful mentors at the district and conference level. These dedicated women have served faithfully in their churches and communities, supporting missions and missionaries in our country and around the world.

While meeting with two units in the Harrisonburg area recently, I learned of their great work underway or planned for the future. I know this is occurring across our district as well. Please take a moment to "pat yourself on the back" and celebrate your accomplishments. Know that you understand your PURPOSE and are living it out in all you do. Good job!!

It is helpful to review the LIOP form now to determine what has been accomplished and what your unit plans by the end of August. This makes it easier to complete the LIOP form by the deadline, September 1.

Please take advantage of all UWF resources - Daily Prayer Guide, Program Book, *Response* magazine, and the Reading Program. Our district officers are also available as a resource to provide a program.

You are invited to attend the following fellowship and learning opportunities:

- **District South "Evening Together" on Thursday, May 21st at 7 pm at Asbury UMC, 205 Main St., Harrisonburg. Speaker: Jeff Wilhelm from Hope Distributed**.

- **Our District UWF/UMM will host a Breakfast during Annual Conference on June 19th at 7:00 am in the Dayton UMC Social Hall, 215 Ashby St., Dayton.** Since this will be in our district, I encourage everyone to attend even if you aren't a delegate to Annual Conference. Contact Laura Douglass at douglass.laura.b@gmail.com to register or for additional information.

- **Mission U will be held on July 24-26 in Chesapeake at New Creation UMC.** For registration information contact Laura Douglass at missionu@vauwf.org.

**Future opportunities to attend:**

May 15-17 UWF Natonal Assembly, Indianapolis, IN
July 24-25 Mission U – New Creation UMC, Chesapeake

Aug. 15 Fun Gathering - Shenandoah Co. Park
Sept. 12 Prayer Breakfast - Mtn. Valley UMC

Again, you've got this!! Remember to review the LIOP with your unit, even if you aren't able to achieve an award and send to me by September 1. Then we can celebrate your hard work at our District and Conference Annual Meetings this fall. If you have photos or videos of your unit's activities, please share them with me at sharold714@aol.com.

I hope you are enjoying this beautiful spring weather and God's wonderful creation. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Blessings to all,

**Sharon Harold**
**District Education & Interpretation Coordinator**
sharold714@aol.com
Home: 540-879-2270 or Cell: 540-246-4940

***He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.***
***Micah 6:8 NIV***

# *EVENING TOGETHER*

**WHEN: THURSDAY, MAY 21 at 7 PM**
**WHERE: ASBURY UMC, 205 S. MAIN ST., HARRISONBURG**
**GUEST SPEAKER: JEFF WILHELM of HOPE DISTRIBUTED**

Asbury UWF will host the **Evening Together**, traditionally held by UWF units in the southern part of our Shenandoah River District. Now all of our district unit members are invited to come for fellowship and an interesting program. Jeff Wilhelm, a founder of Hope Distributed, will speak about this local mission, which provides "Food, Clothes, Baby Supplies, Hope."

VIRGINIA UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH & UNITED METHODIST MEN

# Annual Conference Breakfast

6:30AM Friday, June 19, 2026

## Dayton UMC

215 Ashby Street
Dayton, VA 22821-9555

## Speaker: Jeremy Harold,

## "Caring for God's Creation"

### Breakfast Buffet

- $18.00 collected at the door
- Make check payable to VA UWF
- Indicate Gluten-Free or Vegan on registration

Registration open March 11 - June 12:
https://forms.gle/HLvjrWHY3yz1WFjV8

Event registrar Laura Douglass can be reached at douglass.laura.b@gmail.com, 540-273-8935

United Methodist Men

United Women in Faith

vauwf.org

edited: Apr 23, 2026