

PASS IT ON WITH PURPOSE

Summer 2026

Shenandoah River District United Women in Faith



United
Women
in Faith

SAVE THE DATE

August 10 – Rainbow Giver forms & money due to District Treasurer

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

September 1 – Deadline to submit:

- Living Into Our Purpose form to District E&I Coord.
- Reading Program Report to District SPR
- Names of deceased members to MN&O Coord.

September 12 – District Prayer Breakfast (SOUTH), 9 am, Mt. Valley UMC

September 17 – 3rd Quarter Remittances due to District Treasurer

September 18-19 – Young Women's Retreat, Blessings Lodge, Camp Overlook

September 24 – District Exec. Committee Meeting, 7 pm – Zoom

October 1 – District Annual Meeting, 7 pm – Zoom

October 8 – Newsletter deadline

October 24 – Conference Annual Meeting, 10 am – 12 pm, Shady Grove UMC, Mechanicsville

FROM THE CO-VICE PRESIDENT (SOUTH)

It's so hard to believe that we are already into the second part of our UWF activities. We have been blessed by these events, which enrich our lives. We have celebrated a Prayer Breakfast and will soon have the opportunity to enjoy another Prayer Breakfast in September. Several members attended the UWF National Assembly in Indianapolis, IN. The Virginia United Methodist Annual Conference was held in Harrisonburg. Many members of the UWF helped make the UWF/UMM Conference Breakfast a success! Recently members had the opportunity to participate in Mission U at Chesapeake, VA. We are so grateful for those who attended and hope to hear about their experiences in the near future.



But there's more! Please mark your calendar for our August Fun Gathering, August 15 from 11 am – 1:30 pm. at Shenandoah County Park, Maurertown, VA. I encourage you to join us for fun, fellowship, friendship nurturing, and food! The shelter is reserved and full details will be available soon. Our President, Mary Preston, has always hoped this time together would draw us closer together. I know we can honor her wishes with joy! Another event is the Prayer Breakfast at Mountain Valley UMC (invitation included in newsletter) on September 12 starting at 9 am. Looking ahead let's remember December 7 and 8 for the annual Camp Overlook UWF Christmas Luncheon.

We will soon prepare for our District UWF Annual Meeting on October 1 via Zoom.

Our president, Mary Preston, is presently dealing with medical treatment that will involve the next months. Please continue to pray for her and those responsible for her care. She is a very faithful servant and we have always been blessed by her dedication to the responsibilities as a Woman of Faith!

Excerpt from prayer by Audrey Stanton-Smith (*Response*)

...May our actions be rooted in Scripture and fueled by the Holy Spirit.
Guide us through our journey into deeper sisterhood, leadership and action.
.... In Jesus name we pray.
Amen.

Blessings,

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



FROM THE TREASURER

Greetings UWF,

A big thank you for the work each of your units are doing. We have completed the 2nd Quarter in 2026 and we are a little over half way to reaching our goal for pledge to Missions. The total remittance sent to the VA UWF was \$12,160.75, making a total for the 1st two Quarters \$28,527.59. The breakdown is as follows:

	2nd Qtr	1st Qtr	Total
Pledge to Missions	\$10,071.25	\$10,239.25	\$20,310.50
Candle Burning	200.00	1,756.45	1,956.45
SMR	80.00	80.00	160.00
Gift to Mission	35.00	120.00	155.00
Gift in Memory	260.00	110.00	370.00
World Thank Offering	10.00	701.86	711.86
Call to Prayer & Self-Denial	1,117.00	1,492.50	2,609.50
National Projects	25.00	650.00	675.00
Virginia Projects	112.50	637.50	750.00
Legacy Fund	250.00	579.28	829.28

The balance in our A&MD is \$5,626.58.

Please keep up the good work; thanks everyone for adding your unit number to the remittance form.

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

SOCIAL ACTION

Reviewing and Visioning SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY as United Women in Faith

The United Women in Faith's two social action priorities for 2025-2028 are *Climate justice* and *Mass incarceration and the Criminalization of Communities of Color*. As each unit prepares to submit its 2026 *Living into Our Purpose* form in August, give thanks for the ways you have responded to these Social Justice opportunities.



Be the Voice: Action & Advocacy

- ★ 3a. Own an Issue & Turn Talk into Action: Select one District or Conference Social Action Priority and launch a project or present a compelling program that directly addresses your chosen Social Action Priority. Educate, inspire, and mobilize your unit!
- ★ 3b. Connect to the Core: Ensure your unit is represented at key events by sending a member to either the United Methodist Day at General Assembly (if held) or to a webinar addressing your chosen Social Action Priority.
- ★ 3c. Become a Justice Hub: Designate a Justice Champion to sign up for UWF Action Alerts and Virginia Interfaith Center alerts (<http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org>), gather resources from the UMC Church and Society website, (<https://www.umcjustice.org>) and share that vital information at your local organization meetings.
- ★ 3d. Live the Charter for Racial Justice: Implement or continue your commitment to racial justice by hosting a program, or attending a District/Conference event. Beginning in September, respond to opportunities to show love and support to youth incarcerated at the Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Detention Center in Verona along with the staff.
- ★ 3e. Embrace Climate Justice: Participate in UWFaith's climate justice work by adopting the "Be Just. Be Green. 13 Steps To Sustainability" principles and participating in Just Energy 4 All webinars or Virginia Conference Green Church Initiative.

[UWFaith WHYWeDoSocialAction 2026.pdf](#)

<https://uwfaith.org/what-we-do/serve-and-advocate/climate-justice/>

<https://uwfaith.org/what-we-do/serve-and-advocate/racial-justice/>

<https://uwfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/RacialJusticeCharterEnglish.pdf>

<https://doc.vaumc.org/ChurchSociety/GreenChurchInitiative.pdf>

Laura Douglass

District Social Action Coordinator

Email: lauradouglass@vaumc.org

Cell: 540-271-1558



SPIRITUAL GROWTH

How do you nurture and grow your spirit?

UWF encourages us to nurture of spiritual growth so that we can be whole persons through Jesus Christ and fully engage in mission. There are many ways to nurture our spiritual growth including reading and studying scripture, reflection and prayer, listening to music, gardening, journaling, spending time with friends and family, arts and crafts, being in nature, bubble baths, that perfect cup of tea or coffee, and more. Make time to read your *Response* or a book from the Reading Program, watch a webinar, listen to a podcast, or attend an event.

We did not have a District Soul Care Retreat this year, but we have the perfect event coming up to care for your soul. On August 15 at 11 am, we will gather at the Shenandoah County Park in Maurertown. It is our opportunity to relax, pray, eat, and spend time in nature. Take time to feast your eyes on the beauty of nature, breathe in the fresh air as you experience the Spirit of God, be uplifted and encouraged by your sisters in Christ, and nourished by food and the activities.

I encourage each of you to spend time asking God for guidance in seeking the things that will nurture your spirit and draw you closer to Jesus. I hope to see you in Maurertown. For now, I leave you with this challenge given to us by Rev. Leigh Anne Taylor at our Conference Retreat.

“Strive to Sabbath: a moment every hour, an hour every day,
a day every week, and a week every year.”

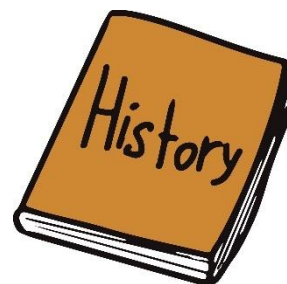
Rita Biggs
District Spiritual Growth Coordinator
Email: Biggs40@gmail.com
Cell: 540-749-2278



HISTORIAN'S CORNER

Ladies,

Last year I realized that my memories were almost entirely Caucasian. That is terrible, especially since I have worked on the Charter for Racial Justice on the regional as well as conference levels. Last quarter's history was taken from "A History of the Women's Missionary Society 1874-2003 of the African Methodist Episcopal Church." Since I had travelled and roomed with women from Mt. Zion Leesburg and Mt. Zion Hamilton in the 1980s and 90s, I reached out to Leesburg for their history.



Mary Lee Perry and Violet Jackson sent us this remembrance.

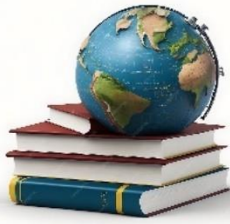
In 1867 when Mt. Zion opened, there was a Ladies Aid Society. This organization made the Sunday School Banner which is displayed in the Fellowship Hall today. Over the years the name changed to Women's Society of Christian Service and in later years to United Methodist Women, which we are called today. There follows a list of past presidents and prominent members (omitted from article). Some of the activities the Ladies sponsored were Lawn Parties at their homes, Musicals and Recitals at the Church, Teas in their homes and at Church, Plays at the Church and Guest Speakers. The biggest event was always the Bazaars they held at the Church. The monies from these activities went to help pay the Pastor and the bills in the Church.

A lot of times the meetings were held at a member's home and the hostess always served a repass. These ladies were dedicated to what they were doing and took pride in the work they were doing for the Lord and were joyful to meet and greet each other.

On a personal note, I encourage you to attend their Spring Tea if possible. The worship service is laudable. The fellowship room décor great; the sight of all of us in our Sunday best and fancy hats is fun; the tea is hot, the treats tasty. Your offering (admission) is for "others" and appreciated.

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

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." ~ John Wesley



EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION

Dream it! Believe it! Do it!

This was the theme of UWF 2026 Assembly, which I had the pleasure of attending May 14-17 in Indianapolis, Indiana. What a wonderful experience it was. I attended along with 30+ members of the VA Conference UWF, 2 members from our district, as well as UWF members across the globe. The keynote speaker was Stacy Abram along with her mother, the Rev. Carolyn Abram. Our resident clergy was Rev. Stephenie York Arnold, General Secretary of COSROW. We enjoyed wonderful music, inspirational programs, informative classes, learning about mission work, and great connections with 3,000 dedicated women from the US and around the world.

Our foundational scriptures came from Matthew 5:13-16, Jeremiah 29:11, and John 10:10b. We were encouraged through these scriptures to “let our light shine using our God given gifts and talents, knowing that God has a plan for us and that Jesus came so that we may have abundant life.”

The Unstoppable Campaign was introduced encouraging everyone to go out and spread the good news of all the good works that are being done with the goal of introducing more women to UWF and helping them realize their gifts and talents. So, we are to **Dream** the possibilities, **Believe** that we can do it, and then go out and **Do it!**

We also learned of changes to the UWF National Office. There will no longer be a Resource Department available to order books, resource materials or UWF supplies. To order the Prayer Calendar, Program Book or books on the Reading Program List, members will now use Amazon. I will share further information about this as it becomes available.

Change is hard. I have lived through great change during the past 2 years. Recently I heard a sermon that told me you just need to keep showing up and God will show up also. I congratulate you for showing up and for all the good work that you, your unit, and church accomplish. Remember that God will always show up no matter how difficult the task.

This is the time of year when UWF collects information about our activities during the past 12 months. We will celebrate all our good work at our District Annual Meeting on October 1 and at our Conference Annual Meeting on October 24. This means that all of our reports need to be completed soon. As your Education & Interpretation Coordinator, I am responsible for the “***Living Into Our Purpose***” form (LIOP). Now is the time for each unit to reach out to your members, share the information on the LIOP form, and determine what has been accomplished individually, as a unit, or as part of your church. Then fill out your form and return to me by **September 1**. The LIOP form is attached to this newsletter if it is needed. Please know that no matter how little or much you have completed, we want to hear from you. Each of you is important and your work matters, whether big or small. So *please* let us know so we may celebrate you at our Annual Meeting.

Forms may be emailed to me at sharold714@aol.com or mailed to 4580 Ottobine Rd., Dayton, VA 22821. Any questions contact me at (540-246-4940).

May God be with you in all you do as you serve your church, community, nation and women, children, and youth around the world.

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

Your Sister in Christ,

Sharon Harold
District Education & Interpretation Coordinator

sharold714@aol.com

Home: 540-879-2270 or Cell: 540-246-4940

PROGRAM RESOURCES

It's that time again! The 2026 Reading Program has drawn to a close for the year. I hope your past year's book reading was rewarding and made you reflect and think. Please send in your Report of the number of books read by your unit--individuals and children. The report is due to me next month no later than 15 August 2026.



Remember *Response* magazine and the Faith Talks podcasts are part of the Reading Program and get you credit toward your Report of books completed.

The invitation is still out for all ladies to join the District Book Club, which meets every other Wednesday 7-8 pm via zoom. Let me know if you're interested in joining us. We'll be starting a new book in the next few weeks.

Angela Lane
Secretary of Program Resources

Email: angln46@comcast.net

Cell: 703-298-4068

faith

action

sisterhood

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

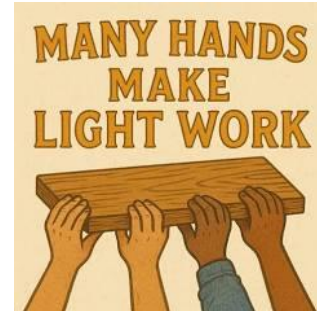
The Nominations Committee is diligently working to fill all positions. Please prayerfully consider serving as **Co-Vice President (NORTH)** or a member of the **Nominations Committee**.

Debbie Creech

Chair, Nominations Committee

Email: debbiecreech@vaumc.org

Cell: 617-285-1312



From the July/August *Response* by Audrey Stanton-Smith
Inspired by this issue's Bible study

A Prayer for Action

Loving God, we thank you for this unstoppable sisterhood.

Thank you for equipping us to serve boldly with the knowledge that Jesus is with us.

Through your Word, remind us that faith is not just something to believe; it is also something to practice.

May our actions be rooted in Scripture and fueled by the Holy Spirit.

Guide us through our journey into deeper sisterhood, leadership, and action.

Strengthen our focus on climate justice and ending mass incarceration and the criminalization of communities of color.

And enable our influence to inspire others to join us.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen



United
Women
in Faith

***Shenandoah River District UWF- South
Prayer Breakfast***

When: Saturday, September 12, 2026, 9:00 am

Where: Mountain Valley UMC

11583 Mountain Valley Rd.

Broadway, VA 22802

What: Breakfast Buffet \$16.00 per person

Deadline to register Aug. 31

Pay at the door - Make checks payable to Mountain Valley UWF

Please plan to join us as we welcome our guest speaker

Rev. Amanda Garber, Central Valley Habitat for Humanity

Resource Development Coordinator

A Freewill Offering will be taken for Central Valley Habitat for Humanity

Everyone is welcome to attend!!!

Please return the following info to Barbara Phillips by AUG. 31

Name _____ Church _____

Email _____ Phone # _____

Any Special Dietary needs? _____

Gluten Free? _____

Return by August 31 to:

Barbara Phillips

grammybp@gmail.com or mail to:

1549 Mauzy Athlone Rd.

Broadway, VA 22815

Call: 540-383-9972 for questions

Living Into Our Purpose (LIOP): Mission Today Units

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Our 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.

Deadline: September 1

Submit to District E & I Coordinator:

Local Organization/Church	
Number of Members	
President or Contact Person	
Phone	
Email	

The purpose of becoming a Mission Today Unit is to invigorate UWFaith members' involvement in Mission. This is achieved by:

- **Energizing engagement** through **prayer, study, and action**.
- **Increasing transparency** by connecting units, coordinators, and projects so members **understand the impact of their financial contributions**.
- **Promoting the use of UWFaith mission resources**.
- **Broadening the scope of mission** to include concepts like **social justice**.

Our UNIT's GOAL for the coming year is to be a _____ level Unit.

A unit is any organized group of UWFaith within a church or district. Some units are composed of several circles or members from different churches which periodically meet as a unit.

Level	Total Items to Complete Units of 20+ members	Total Items to Complete Units of 11-19 members	Total Items to Complete for 10 and under members
VISIONARY	Completed 1a.	Completed 1a.	Completed 1a.
BRONZE	12 total items including 6 ★ items	6 total items including 3 ★ items	4 total items including 2 ★ items
SILVER	14 total items including 7 ★ items	8 total items including 4 ★ items	6 total items including 3 ★ items
GOLD	16 total items including 8 ★ items	10 total items including 5 ★ items	8 total items including 4 ★ items

Living Into Our Purpose (LIOP): Mission Today Units
VIRGINIA CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

1. Our Purpose — Strengthen Your Commitment and Impact



- ★ 1a. **Elevate your giving!** Don't just make and meet a **Pledge to Mission Giving** ; challenge your local organization to **increase** that Pledge this year. (*Send funds to your District Treasurer.*)

How did fulfilling your Pledge to Mission connect your unit's work to the global ministries of United Women in Faith?



- ★ 1b. **Go for the Gold (or Six Stars!)**: Strive to qualify as a **Five- or Six-Star Organization** by contributing through all **six channels of Mission Giving**:

- ☐ Pledge to Mission ☐ Special Mission Recognition ☐ Gift to Mission
☐ Gift in Memory ☐ World Thank Offering ☐ Candle Burning

What other mission areas were you able to financially support with your gifts?



- ★ 1c. **Invest in the Future**: Ensure your organization **participates in the United Women in Faith 150th Legacy Fund** to secure the next century of mission work (**\$186.90 or more**).



- ★ 1d. **Inspire Individually**: Encourage at least **one member to become a Rainbow Giver** – A truly special way to deepen their personal commitment.



- ★ 1e. **Remember Your Purpose**: Start every single meeting, whether in-person or virtual, by sharing the **UWF Purpose**. Let it guide your discussions and actions.

How has reciting the UWF Purpose at each meeting strengthened your unit's shared vision and sense of mission?



- 1f. **Deepen Your Faith**: Honor and participate in "**A Call to Prayer and Self Denial**" by holding a dedicated program and collecting the offering.

2. Know God — Deepen Your Faith and Action

Living Into Our Purpose (LIOP): Mission Today Units

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

☐	2a. Elevate Your Practice: Encourage every member to practice spiritual disciplines daily (like reading Scripture , prayer , or fasting) to enrich their personal connection to the mission.
☐	★ 2b. Become Prayer Warriors: Designate at least one Prayer Guide to lead focused, intentional prayer at every meeting— in-person or virtual —for the specific mission projects and workers supporting women, children, and youth.
☐	2c. Invest in Inspiration: Ensure at least one member attends a District or Conference Spiritual Life Event . These powerful events revitalize our purpose and connect us to a broader community of faith.
☐	2d. Champion Our Youth: Host or participate in a Children’s Defense Fund Children’s Sabbath . Use this special observance to highlight and address the critical needs of children in your community and beyond.
☐	★ 2e. Spark Dynamic Programs: Utilize the Program Resource manual to inject fresh ideas and relevant content into your meetings. Commit to using at least two programs from this resource this year to inform and inspire your members. What Programs did you use and how did the programs inspire/grow your unit spiritually? _____ _____

3. Experience Freedom as Whole Persons — *Be the Voice: Action & Advocacy*

☐	★ 3a. Own an Issue & Turn Talk into Action: Select one District or Conference Social Action Priority and launch a project or present a compelling program that directly addresses your chosen Social Action Priority. Educate, inspire, and mobilize your unit! What Social Action Priority did your unit focus on and what was its impact? _____ _____
☐	★ 3b. Connect to the Core: Ensure your unit is represented at key events by sending a member to either the United Methodist Day at General Assembly (if held) or to a webinar addressing your chosen Social Action Priority . What events was your Unit able to attend: _____ Who was able to attend: _____

Living Into Our Purpose (LIOP): Mission Today Units

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

3c. **Become a Justice Hub:** Designate a **Justice Champion** to sign up for **UWF Action Alerts** and **Virginia Interfaith Center alerts** (<http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org>), gather resources from the **UMC Church and Society website**, (<https://www.umcjustice.org>) and share that vital information at your local organization meetings.

Who is your **Justice Champion**: _____

★ 3d. **Live the Charter for Racial Justice:** Implement or continue your commitment to racial justice by hosting a program, or attending a District/Conference event.

Describe what you did—let's make equity a reality!

3e. **Embrace Climate Justice:** Participate in **UWFaith's climate justice work** by adopting the **"Be Just. Be Green. 13 Steps To Sustainability"** principles and participating in **Just Energy 4All** webinars or Virginia Conference Green Church Initiative.

How did your unit go green this year!

4. Develop a Creative, Supportive Fellowship — *Grow Community & Deepen Connections*

4a. **Expand Our Reach:** Make it a priority to **add new members** to your roll this year. Recruit at least two new members (one new member for units with 15 or fewer). **Let's make room for more women of faith!**

4b. **Invest in Future Leaders: Sponsor a young woman** (age 18-40) to attend a District or Conference Young Women's Event (if held). Check for available scholarships—this is a powerful investment in our future!

★ 4c. **Connect Beyond Local:** Ensure your unit is represented at the broader level. Have at least **two members** attend the **District or Conference Annual Meeting** to network, learn, and be inspired.

★ 4d. **Strengthen Our Network:** Invite a **District or Conference Officer** to speak at one of your local meetings or your United Women in Faith Sunday. **A fresh perspective strengthens us all!**

★ 4e. **Honor the Legacy:** Submit the names of all your deceased members to the District Membership, Nurture & Outreach Coordinator or District President by the deadline to ensure their contribution is formally recognized and celebrated.

Living Into Our Purpose (LIOP): Mission Today Units

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

5. Expand Concepts of Mission – Education, Inspiration & Direct Mission Connection

- ☐ ★ 5a. **Make Time for response:** Ensure your unit has at least one subscription to the **response magazine** and commit to having a "**response moment**" at every meeting. Use this time to share a mission story from the magazine and keep members informed of our global impact!
- ☐ 5b. **Deep Dive into Mission:** Invest in knowledge by having at least **two members attend** the **Conference Mission U** in July. These events are **vital for education and spiritual renewal!**
- ☐ ★ 5c. **Commit to Growth:** Challenge your Unit to have at least **two members** complete **Plan I** of the **UWFaith Reading Program**. Don't keep the wisdom to yourselves—**commit to sharing the insights from one of your books with the entire unit!**
- ☐ ★ 5d. **Support a Mission Site:** Select a specific **mission institution or project supported by UWFaith**. The **Wesley Community Service Center** is a **National Mission Institution in Virginia** or by funds through the Ministry Grants of Virginia.

6. Participate in Global Ministries – Hands-On Mission

- ☐ ★ 6a. **Be the Hands of Christ:** Get one or more members out there to **participate in hands-on mission!** Whether it's gleaning, volunteering at a food pantry, working a clothes closet, or tackling a Rise Against Hunger event.

Describe the tangible difference your Unit made.

- ☐ ★ 6b. **Support Our Schools and Children:** Actively **participate in the Campaign for Children** by getting involved in a Children's Sabbath, supporting public education, mentoring or tutoring, or directly supporting local schools.

Tell us how your Unit championed children this year.

- ☐ 6c. **Pack Kits, Change Lives:** Provide at least **10 UMCOR mission kits** and the funds for shipping for the Virginia Annual Conference's "Kits for Conference." **These kits deliver hope during times of crisis!**
- ☐ 6d. **Minister to the Incarcerated:** **Make a donation** (goods, money for a chaplain, etc.) **or offer service** (like a Bible study) to local prison ministries. **Your support is a vital lifeline to those in the prison system.**

Total Items Achieved