

**AUGUST/
SEPTEMBER
2016**

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SOUTH WEST DISTRICT SOJOURNER

UMW Publication Florida Conference

Greetings my South West District Sisters!

I hope you all have had a wonderful summer! Perhaps either by summer cleaning (grr), fishing, golfing, laying by the pool or just plain resting (ahh)! We are now in to the ninth month of the year, and I cannot believe the fall season is right around the corner! Time to get back in the District saddle!!

Our first District event after our summer break will be here before we know it. Back in July, I, along with many of your District Team and others from our South West District (all totaling approximately 15 ladies) attended this year's Mission u. As a result of our schooling, we are proud to bring you a "sample" of each study available. This will take place on September 17th in Bonita Springs and hopefully you will be able to join us. Read on in this newsletter for more information!

On a side note, remember, this is YOUR newsletter! Would you like to see your unit's name and pictures mentioned in future editions? If so, Mary is waiting to hear from you!!! All you have to do is email her with an article along with photos and she'll get them into print! It's that easy! We'd love to hear from you and see what YOUR unit has been doing!

Also, if you have any changes within your unit, such as email or telephone or address changes, please see that Sissie Lumpkin or Mary Van Tol receives them. We can't reach you if we can't find you!

Looking forward to seeing you on the 17th and hearing what all your units have been doing!!

Blessings to each of you,

Shelley Davidson
District President

United Methodist Women's PURPOSE

The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be 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.



Shelley Davidson at the Latin Festival

Pray - Learn - Transform

Mission u 2016



Marti Daltry, Gloria Heston, Roberta Swords, Mary Van Tol with our new friend Gloria



Ruth Jean-Pierre, Dean
Lachetta James Snowden, musician



Jewel Weaver and Diane Killmaier

District Members learning about The Bible & Human Sexuality with Leader Deaconess Nan Gordon



Pamela Freeland (2nd left),
Dorris Ann Wasson on right



Mary Van Tol, Kathi Hart (3rd & 4th left)



Nancy Vanderwall, Joyce Shelso
(2nd & 3rd left)



Climate Justice Altar



Mary Melvin, Roberta Swords, Sharyn Ladner



The Bible and Human Sexuality Altar

Below is an article written by Ruth Levins from Crystal River UMW (Gulf Central District) in Citrus County who attended "The Bible and Human Sexuality" class given by Deaconess Nan Gordon which I attended. Several of our District team and members were also in attendance. Ruth kindly took pictures of our class. She is a frequent contributor to her local newspaper in the Crystal River area and shared this article with me. Thanks go out to her as she described her experiences during Mission u.

Mary Van Tol, District Vice President



All about working together for a better world



Ruth Levins
**AROUND
THE
COMMUNITY**

Last month, Florida United Methodist Women gathered once more for their annual Florida Conference-sponsored Mission U. at the Bethune Cookman University in Daytona Beach. I attended, representing Citrus County and the Crystal River United Methodist Women.

The four-day conference courses taken were "Climate Justice: A Call to Hope and Action," taught by Dr. Larry Rankin, a retired missionary to Latin America, and "The Bible and Human Sexuality:

Claiming God's Good Gift," taught by United Methodist deaconess Nan Gordon.

The event featured inviting displays, abundant resources, engaging small-group discussions, role playing, a prayer room, morning devotions, morning and evening plenaries, classes for children and youths, hands-on learning center opportunities and the exciting Latin America Cultural Celebration Festival and the Friday Night Talent Show.

It was a learning experience that

has been a part of my life for the past 40-plus years; a time to come away to fellowship, to share, to learn, to pray and experience studies that help us understand our mission as United Methodist Women.

Reflective quotes from the "Climate Justice" class included:

"If we want children to flourish, to become truly empowered, then let us allow them to love the Earth before we ask them to save it." — David Solbel

See LEVINS/Page D3

LEVINS

Continued from Page D1

"Care for our environment begins with appreciation of beauty." — Katherine Murray

"Nature literacy is the ability to learn from and respond to direct experiences of nature, seeing nature as a direct inclusive whole, redefining community as an interwoven dependence on God, nature and each other." — Katherine Murray

In the "Climate Justice" class, we began to understand the interconnectedness of the issues of poverty as environmental and our stewardship responsibilities of God's creation and the need to treat each other with respect. To get to the truth, we studied the scriptures, shared our experiences, discussed the traditions and developed reasoning, in communion with one another.

We learned that when we engage in necessary change as a ministry, we do so in small increments such as recycling in our home, composting and changing our lifestyle by buying food that is grown in our area and resisting the media's "oversell."

"Climate Justice" is a spiritual, ethical, political endeavor that seeks to

make us recognize and address the intended consequences of our actions in ways that respect and value the whole of creation. Some of the major movements addressing climate change issues are Habitat for Humanity, Heifer International, SMILE Program and Ship Hope.

Some of the solutions shared by class members included:

- Use windmills instead of power plants for energy.
 - The plastic bag ban support and the use of cloth bags.
 - Take back the power from corporations that encourage us to buy more stuff. (Overconsumption: the "more is better" ideology.)
 - Run green businesses — "Go Green!" (Use dishes instead of Styrofoam.)
 - Supply mature jobs for the older population.
 - Sharing instead of perpetual acquiring.
 - Divest stock in companies that are underpaying their workers.
 - If there are more than five ingredients on a label of food, don't buy it.
 - Use solar energy instead of electricity.
 - Reduce transportation with a one-car family.
- In this class, we learned that self-esteem rises as we judge the reality of an

issue with the Bible, of how things can be done, then organize — a team effort with no blaming, no judging, with meditation, prayer and afterward, an evaluation of the changes.

It's all about many people coming together to incrementally make changes, such as the issue of overfishing, water pollution and doing sustainability projects together, rather than in isolation.

In the "Bible and Human Sexuality Class," we gathered for meditation worship presented by class members, with instructor Nan Gordon playing her guitar or flute to call us together. Many biblical videos were shown and discussed in our small group.

Some of the quotes from the videos, our instructor, the Bible, class members, our study book, "The Bible and Human Sexuality: Claiming God's Good Gift," written by Ellen A. Brubaker, were:

- The church is a hospital for hurting people, not a country club for saints.
- Being a gay person is a personal decision.
- A reconciling church is an accepting church for varied lifestyles.
- For women, sex is a decision from her mind to her body (an emotional, thinking and trusting closeness, talking and touching lovingly).
- Good sex is a gift, a joyous expression, a lifelong bonding.
- Sex is a sacred connection; God's

grace in the flesh.

Solutions that were shared by class members included:

■ We need to willingly and openly have sexual conversations with youths to clear up the myriad messages that they are hearing about it in order to help them understand that it is a precious gift of God to be experienced with moral integrity.

■ I shared with the class the Hacienda Girls Ranch, located in Melbourne, which is sponsored by the GFWC Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, where girls can live when situations in the home are intolerable, sometimes due to stepfathers' abuse with girls.

■ After viewing a video about a troubled gay person, I suggested that the church could sponsor a support group for parents of gay children where they could share possible accepting thoughts.

We concluded that we are sexual beings and sexuality can be exploited or it can draw us closer to the one we love and that we are called to be a community of faith, of healing, reconciliation and love, with open minds and hearts.

Ruth Levins participates in a variety of projects around the community. Let her know about your group's upcoming activities by writing to P.O. Box 803, Crystal River, FL 34423.

Reminders for Unit Reports

I hope this quick note finds that you have had a good summer and as we start again strong this season with UMW please be mindful of the end of the year. It is now time to get your unit reports in so that your unit can get credit for what you have done. I have begun collecting Social Action reports to send to our Conference. If you have not already sent in your report you can send it to me at the address below, email it to me at **Mayberry.betty46@gmail.com** or hand it to me at the Mission Sampler in September. Looking forward to continued success this year and have a blessed day.

Betty Mayberry- Social Action Coordinator
18947 Ayrshire Circle
Port Charlotte, FL 33948



Greetings Ladies,

I am writing to remind all Unit Spiritual Growth Coordinators that September is the last month to get me your memorials for the Annual Meeting reading of the Memorials. I will be submitting the information provided by October 1st so that our Vice President can put together the program. In the past I have accepted late requests; however, this is no longer possible as it will delay the printing of the Annual Book. I have currently received two requests.

On another note. We will be gearing back up with our District meetings beginning this month on the 17th. I have been doing the altars up to now on my own because I have been of the mindset this past year and going into the new that "Simpler is Better." If you have been to any of the meetings you will have noticed the Altar is not overdone. Should your church be hosting any of our future meetings and you would be so inclined to help do an Altar please let me know as I would be more than willing to work with you to include your ideas into our themes.

Hope everyone had a wonderful summer and that we are all ready to get back into swing with our Mission Study Overview on Saturday, September 17th at First Bonita Springs Church.

Blessings and Shalom to all,

Roberta Swords
District Spiritual Growth Coordinator
ladyswrds@msn.com

Charter for Racial Justice Local UMW Certification

South West District United Methodist Women

Local UMW _____ Date _____

City _____ Social Action MC _____

Actions by Local UMW to implement the Charter for Racial Justice Policies. Level I; 6 items, Level II; 12 items; Level III, 20 items

- ____ 1. Provide every member a copy of the charter.
- ____ 2. Devote one Unit meeting each year to the Charter.
- ____ 3. Select videos relating to the Charter to use in Circle Meetings or Unit Meetings.
- ____ 4. Send a member to the School of Christian Missions to take the Social Action Study and present a program on the school when they return.
- ____ 5. Conduct, or participate in a UMW Social Action Mission Study, for your Unit or with a cluster.
- ____ 6. Send a Unit member to the Children's Week in Tallahassee, and present a brief report about it at Unit Meeting.
- ____ 7. Encourage postcard writing to legislators about current social issues supporting people of color.
- ____ 8. At least one member reads a Social Action book and reports, briefly, on it to the Unit.
- ____ 9. Read and share articles from **Response** and **New World Outlook** regularly at Unit meetings.
- ____ 10. Have a special emphasis day, month or Sunday.
- ____ 11. Host a tasting party, cultural fair, or other similar event.
- ____ 12. Use the UMW materials to present a program on racial justice/human rights .
- ____ 13. Collect newspaper articles related to racism, both positive and negative. Share with members at Unit Meetings.
- ____ 14. Award a member a Special Mission Recognition pin for working tirelessly, or doing an outstanding action to try to end racial injustice.
- ____ 15. Attend worship in a church with an ethnic /cultural background different from you own.
Report about this visit to your Unit.
- ____ 16. Use the Charter for Racial Justice to determine issues for study by your Unit.
- ____ 17. Purchase at least one book annually from the Reading Program list that is written by (or about) an author from a minority (sub)culture or another culture.
- ____ 18. Invite a knowledgeable speaker to a Unit meeting who will present information about other countries and cultures.
- ____ 19. Utilize the SW District Resource Bank to plan local Unit programs on Racial Justice.
- ____ 20. Present a program similar to "Justice for Our Neighbors" covering one of the broad issues about immigration

SOUTH WEST DISTRICT United Methodist Women's

Mission Sampler 2016

Saturday, September 17, 2016

Registration: 9-10
Event: 10 AM

First United Methodist Church
27690 Shriver Ave., Bonita Springs, FL 34135

“Pray ~ Learn ~Transform”



LUNCH: \$8 per person
(Please see your unit Treasurer for additional information)

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
 SOUTH WEST DISTRICT
 The United Methodist Church
 Florida Conference
 Mary Van Tol, District Vice President
 1216 SE 19th Terrace, Cape Coral, FL 33990
 239-271-0161
 e-mail: mvantol@embarqmail.com

August 12, 2016

Dear All United Methodist Women:

Greetings to my beautiful Sisters in Christ as we eagerly await our "snow birds" return and try to enjoy these "Dog Days of Summer!" From July 7-10 our District had over 15 members attend Mission u, which was held at Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach. The days were hot, but filled with women from all over the state coming together to learn how we can spread the mission of supporting women, youth and children throughout the world. The program and study leaders were well trained and very inspiring!

Your South West District Mission Team is very excited to bring you a little sample of the studies given. Please make plans to join us Saturday, September 17th. Mark your calendars for this date as we will meet at Bonita Springs First UMC. The address is: 27690 Shriver Ave., Bonita Springs, FL 34135. The theme for the day's event will be "Pray ~ Learn ~ Transform." The studies presented will be "*Climate Justice, a Call to Hope and Action*," "*The Bible and Human Sexuality*" and a refresher on "*Latin America, People and Faith*."

We'll begin our day with registration from 9:00 to 9:45 and the event will begin promptly at 10:00 am. Lunch will be provided for \$8 per person. I have enclosed a reservation form for you to complete and see that your unit Treasurer remits it to Ms. Kathy Schmitt, 11031 Orangewood Drive, Bonita Springs, FL 34135, phone: 239-495-0965; email skattapdance@aol.com.

Also, for your convenience, I have enclosed a flyer to post on your UMW bulletin board as well as in your church bulletin and newsletter. **Please share this announcement with ALL the ladies of your unit.**

Blessings,

Mary Van Tol /svt

Mary Van Tol

For directions please visit our website at www.southwestdistrictumw.com/forms



United
 Methodist
 Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

The organized unit of United Methodist Woman shall be a community of woman 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.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
SOUTH WEST DISTRICT

The United Methodist Church
Florida Conference
Mary Van Tol, District Vice President
1216 SE 19th Terrace
Cape Coral, FL 33990
Phone: 239-271-0161
e-mail: mvantol@embarrqmail.com

Dear Unit Treasurers:

The South West District United Methodist Women will hold their next event September 17, 2016. It will be their Mission Sampler at Bonita Springs First United Methodist Church. The address of the church is: 27690 Shriver Ave., Bonita Springs, FL 34135. We are asking for your assistance in coordinating reservations and collecting money for your unit to cover the luncheon that will be prepared by Bonita Springs United Methodist Women.

The reservations must be received no later than Friday, September 9, 2016 by Ms Kathy Schmitt, Bonita Spring Unit Treasurer. Please use the form at the bottom of this page when you send in your reservation.

Please make the checks payable to Bonita Spring United Methodist Women. Send the form with a check from your unit's checkbook when you make the reservation.

Should you have any other questions, please feel free to contact myself, District Treasurer Dorris Ann Wasson (941-412-0847), or Kathy at the numbers listed on this form. Thank you for helping with this matter.

Blessings,

Mary Van Tol

Mary Van Tol
District Vice President

-----Cut Here-----

Name of Church Unit _____

Name of Person picking up Luncheon Tickets _____

There will be (#) _____ persons eating lunch at \$8 per person
We have enclosed \$ _____ for reservations.

SEND RESERVATIONS TO:

Kathy Schmidt
11031 Orangewood Drive
Bonita Springs, FL 34135
239-495-0965
E-mail: skattapdance@aol.com



September 9-11

Spiritual Enrichment Retreat

At the Life Enrichment Center, Lakeland

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**September 17**

**Racial Justice** reports due to Social Action Coordinator Betty Maybury

**mayberry.betty46@gmail.com**

**Deceased members** report due to Spiritual Growth Coordinator Robert Swords

**ladyswrds@msn.com**

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September 17

Mission Sampler at First United Methodist Church in Bonita Springs

Registration 9-10, Program 10 am

See insert for information

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**October 1**

**3rd Quarter Pledges Due** (send to District Treasurer Dorris Anne Wasson, 1430 Oak St. Nokomis, FL 34275: 941-412-0847)

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***October 15**

11th Annual Meeting at Venice Christ United Methodist Church in Venice

This is



If at anytime throughout the year you or anyone in your unit have updates to contact listings for your ladies, please forward that information to District Secretary, Sissie Lumpkin. She is the person responsible for maintaining our database for the entire District. Once she updates the database, she then forwards the information to your district counterparts so they know how you can be reached.

slump60@gmail.com

863-228-3186

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.”
~ 1John 4:7

Article Deadline

The Sojourner is YOUR newsletter to let others in the District know about your challenges and triumphs working to help those women and children in need. Please **send** me anything you wish to share with the District Units by the **25th of the month.**

Mary Van Tol

Vice President/
Communications Coordinator
South West District
mvantol@embarqmail.com
Cell: 239-571-0161
Home: 239-574-1963

Be sure to visit and bookmark our website to find forms and information about our District.

www.southwestdistrictumw.com

Like us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/southwestdistrictumw>

