

**MARCH
2018**

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SOUTH WEST DISTRICT SOJOURNER

UMW Publication Florida Conference

Greetings South West District Sisters-in-Christ!

“Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high... Is not this the fasting that I choose to loose the binds of injustice, to undo the throngs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?” —Isaiah 58:4b, 6

We are now in the season of Lent which is always a time of fasting, prayer and reflection. In the February issue of *response* magazine there is an article by David Wildman who talks about the prophet Isaiah “who challenged the faithful of his day to wake up and take action: personal piety is not enough. Moreover, in the face of widespread injustice, any attempt to spiritualize our fasting will fall on deaf ears.” He goes on to say that John Wesley, like Isaiah, insisted that we embody both personal holiness and social holiness in our daily lives.

This touched my heart as I will be one of the thousands of Christians who visit the Holy Land on a pilgrimage. I am leaving in a few days for a ten day trip to see the places where Jesus lived, taught and died on a cross for us. I have been preparing for this trip for several months by reading scriptures about the places I will visit, watching videos, and getting together with others who have traveled there. The one thing I haven't done is ask myself the question that David Wildman asks, “How do we respond to the context of prolonged injustice and violence that crushes the people of the holy land today?” I agree with him when he says the pilgrimage is a deeply spiritual experience and I don't know how I will feel when I see the people actually living there. Will I heed Isaiah's cry and hear the voices of Palestinians and Israeli human rights advocates? Is there a way two nations can coexist with very different ideologies? Will my perception about the issue change? Mr. Wildman talks about how the United Methodist Church along with others advocate a two-state solution as the way to just and lasting peace for all but have failed to examine critically the unjust power relations between Israel and Palestine. “One state, Israel, has existed for 70 years, while the Palestinian people have been systematically oppressed and denied justice largely by the actions of Israel.” Should we boycott products made by the Israelis? Should we support the Palestinians who are constantly lashing out with suicide bombers and the like? These and many other questions will be running through my mind as we travel, and although I will most likely not come up with the solution, I hope I will be open to listening to conversations with others to find ways we, in our District can help with the peace process.

United Methodist Women have always been at the forefront of social change and supporting the rights of those who are suppressed, abused, treated unjustly, and more. On May 18-20 we will have a chance to celebrate the Power of BOLD at Assembly in Columbus, Ohio. The lineup of speakers is incredible! Here are a few: Michelle Alexander, Author, "The New Jim Crow"; Katharine Hayhoe, Climate Scientist, National Geographic TV Host; Mallory Tamika, Women's Rights Activist; Marion Wright Edelman, Children's Defense Fund; Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Prize Recipient; Hannah Adair Bonner, Activist/Film Maker and of course Harriett J. Olson, CEO/President United Methodist Women.

Our Florida Conference has a goal of 204 attendees and we need just 11 more from each District to reach that goal. I challenge you to be BOLD and register now! Go here to register: <https://umwassembly.org/>.

Blessings,



Mary Van Tol
President, South West District



Updates

Units in Action

Spring Lake UMC, Sebring

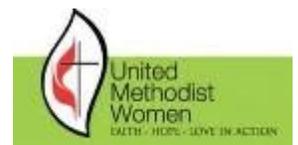


A big "Thank You" to Spring Lake United Methodist Women, Sebring, for an outstanding Mission Study!! "Missionary Conferences of the United Methodist Church in the United States" by J. Ann Craig is a book all units should have in their reading library, so very informative and available through the Reading Program. Many thanks to Pat McShane, facilitator; Linda Spear and her kitchen help for a great lunch and yummy snacks; and Jo Sink for

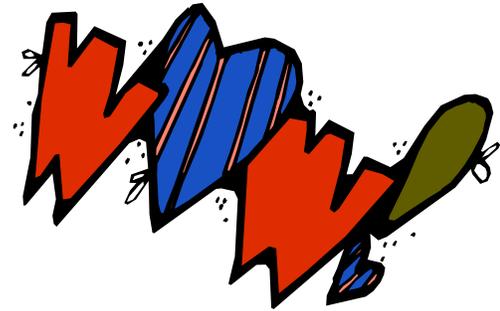


Trinity UMC, Sarasota

Trinity UMW. Sarasota Unit met Feb 12 for "Friends and Chocolate" themed event. The mission outreach was a baby shower for Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota County. The 50 ladies donated so much needed supplies.. the representatives were overwhelmed and so grateful!!



FIRST BOCA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



"For the Love of Children...Recognizing MECE" was the theme of our UMW unit meeting on February 17, 2018 at First Boca, United Methodist Church. We had this recognition to honor and thank our educators who daily share their love with children. This was a special day since it was planned in conjunction with Valentine's week.

Pam Davis, President (pictured far right) began the program in prayer and the lighting of a candle, remembering the unthinkable act of gun violence on Valentine's Day, at the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland. The school is in our district and many of the attendees shared their personal experiences of people in the Parkland community. Davis, a veteran teacher shared the reaction and concerns of the children she teaches. Seventeen people were fatally shot, which included three educators who gave their lives protecting their students.

Each participant was given a paper heart and invited to write a name of a teacher who helped them. Davis shared that reflections and prayers are just the beginning steps in remembering these victims. We need to advocate for children by contacting legislators both at the State and U.S. Capitol to stop Gun Violence! Our young students have no voice or vote, but we can significantly impact with our bodacious voices as we STAND UP and SPEAK OUT, by talking to our elected officials. As an advocate, she says in Florida, "We Must Put Children First!" She urged us all into action.

We had a wonderful presentation by Cathy Herschelman, MECE Director, sharing an overview of the school, a timeline over the years, goals for the school, and ways that our UMW can get involved. Pictured are some of the staff including a former student who concluded the program through a song. The Susanna Circle, under the coordination of Suzanne Reeves and Debbie Woolsey, Vice-President, made the "thank you" boxes (pictured) for teachers and staff members. We enjoyed special Valentine-themed refreshments courtesy of Karin Nordlander and Jane Walters.

Praveena and Tara, thank you for consideration of publishing this timely article as we reach out to make a difference in the lives of women, children, and youth.

Faith, Hope, and Love in Action!



Upcoming Unit Events

Cape Coral First UMC—March 17, 2018

You are cordially invited to the 10th Annual Women's Retreat entitled "The Woman God Sees" on Saturday, March 17, 2018 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. RSVP with a registration form by March 12, 2018 to Nancy Serzan, UMW Treasurer, Cape Coral First United Methodist Church, 4118 Coronado Parkway, Cape Coral, FL 33904. Contact Nancy at (704)861-5757 for additional details.

First Bradenton UMC—April 28th

The ladies will be hosting a Spiritual Growth Event "Peace...Like a River." Plan on attending for this wonderful experience. Registration is from 9a-10a. The Program begins at 10a and should finish by 2:30p. Lunch is \$8.00 a person.



Treasurer's Reminder

Just a reminder to send in your 1st quarter pledges to:

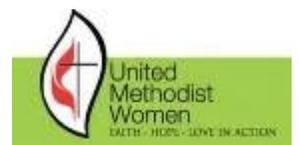
Phyllis Jackman

5317 Congo Court

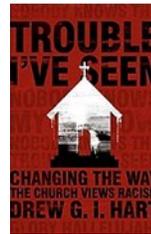
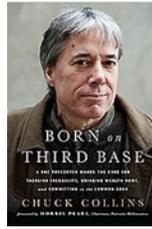
Cape Coral FL 33904

Please submit by April 5th.

Thank you everyone!



Program Resources: Up Coming - What you Need to Know and plan for:



Week of March 12th: Book Club Discussion. Winter Reading: Born on Third Base

March 20th – Beginning of the Book Club reading for spring: *Trouble I've Seen*

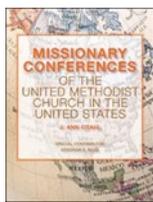
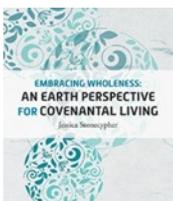
Please Note: You can join the Book Club at any time and you will be included even if you do not have access to a computer – call me at 941-249-8726. Register online www.southwetedistrictumw.com



March 23rd – United Methodist Women “Day of Giving for the Legacy Fund” www.unitedmethodistwomen.org



MARCH, APRIL, MAY AND JUNE – ADVANCE READING FOR MISSION U, JULY 12 – 15, BETHUNE-COOKMAN IN DAYTONA



Spiritual Growth - *Seeking Health and Wholeness*, Geographic (Education for Mission) – *The Missionary Conferences of the United Methodist Church*, Issue Study (Social Action) – *What About Our Money? A*

Mission Study books, United Methodist Women essentials and 2018 Reading Program Books will be available at the Program Resource Table at the Spiritual Growth Event held April 28th at First Bradenton UMC. Forms will be available for the **2018-19 Annual Sampler Offer ends April 2018.**

To order: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/store 1-800-305-9857



I am looking forward to seeing everyone in April at First Bradenton United Methodist Church:



Respectfully, Sandy Segur, SW District SPR sandyrsegur@gmail.com

MEET THE DISTRICT TEAM!

Program Resources

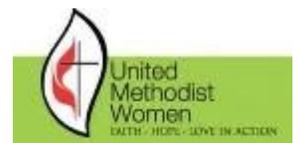


This is me, Sandy Segur, and my husband Tom February 2018. This is a second marriage in 2004 for us both. I being a widower with two children, my son deceased in 2007 and my married daughter giving us two grandchildren; and Tom, divorced with a son and daughter both giving us two grandchildren each. A nice sized family with never a dull moment!

I come from a varied working background. My last job was with an Actuarial Firm near Newark NJ. I have been retired for 12 years and just as busy, if not at times busier, than when I was child rearing and working. Amen!

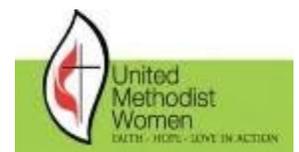
My husband volunteers with the Teacher Supply Depot for the County Schools. In addition, he works with two colleagues in presenting programs to the public to view the sun and stars at county parks and the observatory at Florida South Western College. Astronomy is his passion and he is very generous with his knowledge.

We have lived in Port Charlotte now since 2014 and love Florida. I was active in United Methodist Women in NC both in my unit and the district since 2008 and have been Secretary Program Resources since 2016 here in Florida. The Reading Program brought me to United Methodist Women in search of a Book Club in 2008 and I have come full circle with starting up our South West District Book Club this year! God is so Good! Amen!



<p align="center"><u>JANUARY</u></p> <p align="center"><u>LOCAL UNIT OFFICERS TRAINING</u></p> <p align="center">January 27</p> <p align="center">Sebring First UMC</p> <p align="center">Registration: 9-10 am</p> <p align="center">Program: 10-2:30 pm</p> <p align="center">Lunch: \$8</p>	<p align="center"><u>FEBRUARY</u></p> <p align="center">No District Activities Scheduled</p> <p align="center">*****</p> <p align="center">*<u>MTM</u></p> <p align="center">February 17</p> <p align="center">Clewiston First UMC</p> <p align="center">9:30 am</p>	<p align="center"><u>MARCH</u></p> <p align="center">No District Activities Scheduled</p>	<p align="center"><u>APRIL</u></p> <p align="center"><u>SPIRITUAL GROWTH</u></p> <p align="center">April 28</p> <p align="center">First Bradenton UMC</p> <p align="center">Registration: 9-10 am</p> <p align="center">Program: 10-2:30 pm</p> <p align="center">Lunch: \$8</p> <p align="center">*<u>MTM</u> to follow</p>
<p align="center"><u>MAY</u></p> <p align="center">No District Activities Scheduled</p> <p align="center">*****</p> <p align="center">*<u>MTM</u></p> <p align="center">May 12</p> <p align="center">Friendship</p> <p align="center">Punta Gorda UMC</p>	<p align="center"><u>JUNE</u></p> <p align="center">No District Activities Scheduled</p>	<p align="center"><u>JULY</u></p> <p align="center"><u>MISSION u</u></p> <p align="center">July 12-15</p> <p align="center">Bethune-Cookman</p> <p align="center">Daytona, FL</p> <p align="center">Scholarships available: contact District president.</p>	<p align="center"><u>AUGUST</u></p> <p align="center">No District Activities Scheduled</p> <p align="center">*****</p> <p align="center">*<u>MTM</u></p> <p align="center">August 4</p> <p align="center">Port Charlotte Trinity UMC</p> <p align="center">9:30 am</p>
<p align="center"><u>SEPTEMBER</u></p> <p align="center"><u>SOCIAL ACTION EVENT at ECHO</u></p> <p align="center">September 15</p> <p align="center">North Ft. Myers</p> <p align="center">Time: TBD</p>	<p align="center"><u>OCTOBER</u></p> <p align="center"><u>ANNUAL MEETING</u></p> <p align="center">October 13</p> <p align="center">Cape Coral First</p> <p align="center">Registration: 9-10 am</p> <p align="center">Program: 10-3 pm</p> <p align="center">Lunch: \$8</p>	<p align="center"><u>NOVEMBER</u></p> <p align="center"><u>MISSION STUDY</u></p> <p align="center">November 10</p> <p align="center">Christ Venice UMC</p> <p align="center">Registration: 9-10 am</p> <p align="center">Program: 10-2:30 pm</p> <p align="center">Lunch: \$8</p>	<p align="center"><u>DECEMBER</u></p> <p align="center">No District Activities Scheduled</p> <p align="center">*****</p> <p align="center">*<u>MTM</u></p> <p align="center">December 8</p> <p align="center">Sarasota First UMC</p> <p align="center">9:30 am</p>

*MTM = Mission Team Meeting, District Officers Only



Mark Your Calendars
UPCOMING EVENTS



March 17, 2018

10th Annual Women's Retreat
Cape Coral First UMC
Program: 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

March 30, 2018

Membership Numbers Due

April 5, 2018

1st Quarter Pledges Due

April 28, 2018

Spiritual Growth

First Bradenton UMC
Registration: 9 am—10 am
Program: 10 am—2:30 am
Lunch \$8.00
*MTM to follow

May 12, 2018

Friendship Punta Gorda UMC
MTM—District Officers Only

July 12-15, 2018

Mission U
Bethune-Cookman
Daytona, FL

Communication



Please submit articles for our next Sojourner issue by the **25th** of the month. Send them to the Communications Coordinator listed below. All Unit activities are welcome for submission. Digital photos are preferred.

Ruth Hollandsworth

Communications Coordinator
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Phone: 863-414-6530

Email: ruthhollandsworth.umw@gmail.com

Be sure to visit our websites to get updated news and find information about our District.

www.southwestdistrictumw.com

[www.facebook/southwestdistrictumw.com](https://www.facebook.com/southwestdistrictumw.com)



Save the Date! Join us on March 23rd
as we celebrate our strong legacy
with a special Day of Giving.