

United Methodist Women News

The United Methodist Church • Southwest Texas Conference

Supplement to United Methodist *Witness*

March 23, 2007

UM Women called to “do” and not just be

by Gloria Scott
Mission Coordinator Social Action

Today, we give thanks for having the opportunity to gather together again these days for the 19th Legislative Event. We are thankful to live in a country that was founded to “promote the general welfare” of its people. We are thankful to be a part of the United Methodist Women of the United Methodist Church, which operates with a set of Social Principles that are grounded in the Bible.

We are thankful to be a part of a long legacy of social action in Texas. We are thankful to have given the time and attention to issues that threaten “the general welfare of our citizens” and therefore bind us to address these issues by bringing our concerns to our elected representatives in this democratic republic of representative government that is America.

We are thankful that we have the freedom and responsibility to focus on the state in which we live out our lives as productive, functioning, contributing citizens working for the common good of all of God’s children. We take our direction and cues from the many sources in our Bible, which binds us to “ensure justice” respect the function of government, as citizens, to participate in government and to exercise the ethical influence of the church on government.

Therefore, as we depart to return to our UMW units, our church congregations and community connections, we commit to “make things better than we found them” and to **DO and not just BE.**

We have identified major issues which we collectively identify as needing focused “doing” attention as social action. We have identified the top three on which we will all work as Texas Conferences of UMW.

Issue: Children’s Health Insurance (CHIP). **Social principle:** II The Nurturing Community.

Issue: Environmental Justice. **Social principle:** I The Natural World

Issue: Immigration. **Social principle(s):** III I Social community, IV F Economic community and V A Political community.

UM Women interested in conference’s national missions to travel April 26-28

By Junell Treece
Mission Coordinator for Education and Mission

Traveling across the Southwest Texas Conference April 26 –28 will be a group of women especially interested in the National Missions in the conference. What an informative trip and pleasure it will be to also get a taste of Border Ministry as the tour takes them to Reynosa for a brief time.

Now, the trip begins in Brownsville, then travels up the Rio Grande and turns east at Laredo. From Laredo it will tour Robstown, Corpus Christi and San Marcos. Keep an eye to the road—you may see a United Methodist woman getting better informed about the mission needs within our conference and you just could be one of those women! Check the information below:

Registration is \$60 per person and is limited to 25. **Deadline** for registration is April 13. **No refunds;** however, registration is transferable.

Travel in vans if at all possible, as

we will be caravanning from place to place. **Besides registration fee** you will share the travel expense with everyone in your vehicle and will be responsible for those meals noted to be “on your own.” **Your registration fee** covers lodging and the lunch in Reynosa.

Send registration to Junell Treece, 2511 Lazy Oaks Drive, Austin, TX, 78745. **A registration is not secure until it is paid.** Hope to see you on the tour.

MISSION TOUR 2007 — ITINERARY

Thursday, April 26

4 p.m.: Tour Good Neighbor Settlement House, 1254 E. Tyler, Brownsville, Texas 78521.

5:15 p.m.: **Dinner** on your own

7:15 p.m.: Arrive at Melody Lane Christian Renewal Center in Mission, where we will stay overnight—dormitory style sleeping.

Friday, April 27

7:30 a.m.: **Breakfast** on your own—a Denny’s and two other restaurants are nearby.

8:30 a.m.: Meet with Susan Hel-lums to travel to Reynosa.

10 a.m.: Tour in Reynosa.

Noon: **Lunch** served by Methodist ladies in Reynosa.

1 p.m.: Depart for Laredo.

4:30 p.m.: Tour Holding Institute, Inc., 1102 Santa Maria Ave., Laredo, Texas 78040.

5:30 p.m.: **Dinner** served by Holding Institute, Inc.

7:15 p.m.: Arrive at La Quinta Airport Bob Bullock Rd., Laredo, Texas, where we will stay overnight—two per room.

Saturday, April 28

6-7:30 a.m.: **Breakfast** Continental plus at La Quinta included.

7:30 a.m.: Depart for Robstown.

10:30 a.m.: Tour Wesley Community Center.

11:30 a.m.: **Lunch** on your own.

12:30 p.m.: Depart for Corpus Christi.

1 p.m.: Tour Wesley House.

2 p.m.: Depart for San Marcos.

5 p.m.: Tour Southside Community Center until depart for home.

McAllen District hosts conference annual meeting

The 32nd Southwest Texas Conference annual meeting was held in October 2006 at First UMC, Kings-

ville and hosted by the McAllen District. The theme, *Spirits of Courage and Boldness*, was addressed by Key-

note Speaker Barbara Wheeler, the executive secretary of Communications of Women’s Division, at both the Friday night banquet on the Texas A&M University at Kingsville campus as well as at First UMC Saturday afternoon. Reports on the Membership and Reading Program were received; awards for Five-star Units, Five-Star Women, Mission Today Units, Charter Club Units, Approved Studies and One-Minute Women were also announced. Christian Vocation Scholarship winners were introduced.

The Mission Candle was burned for 42 minutes in honor and in memory of those who have been important in the UM Women mission journey.

The treasurer reported that more than \$225,000 in Mission Giving was contributed to support the mission work of the Women’s Division and the General Board of Global Ministries.



From left: Lois Shaw, UM Women vice-president; Barbara Wheeler, Women’s Division; and Sue Sidney, UM Women president pause for a picture at the 32nd Conference Annual meeting in October.

2007 School of Christian Mission to be held July 19-22

The theme for the 2007 School of Christian Mission, scheduled for July 19-22 at Mt. Wesley Conference Center in Kerrville, is "Sing Across The Walls!" The studies are: music and mission, globalization, and Israel-Palestine.

Each participant will choose two studies. Also included in the schedule will be district gatherings, worship and plenary times where children, youth and adults will present music, skits and drama relative to each study topic. Participants will also help assemble mission kits to be distributed to those in need and will be involved in a hands-on "green team" project.

The cost for the event will be \$165 for adults and youth and \$135 for children. Campus housing is limited, so on campus applications will be on a first come first serve basis. Off campus fees are \$102.

Be sure to mark your calendars now for this year's school. Watch for more information and registration forms in the May Conference newspaper, the *Witness*. Also look for registration forms from your local UM Women unit and on the Southwest Texas Conference UM Women Web site at: <http://www.gbgm-umc.org/swtxumw>.

Refer any questions to Dean Jacque Albrecht, (210) 495-1571 or albrechtjc@hotmail.com, or Assistant Dean Ilda Vasquez, (956) 969-2294 or ildav@rgv.rr.com.

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.



UM Women need to tell their individual stories now more than ever have before

I have been thinking about the following words of Jan Love as she was leaving the position of Deputy General Secretary of the Women's Division.

"I have come to believe that the single most important threat to the vitality and growth of United Methodist Women is simple ignorance and indifference on the part of many United Methodists, including church leaders.

"Clergy and lay alike do not know very much about who we are or what we do. We need to tell our story better than ever before. We need to have unmistakable, creative, fun, convincing and clear messages about the depth of our commitment to Christ's mission in the world."

"Staying focused on mission with women, children and youth is a high calling and a righteous cause. If we do not fulfill this high calling across time and place, if we do not push the church to pay attention to the needs of women and children in poverty, war, health care, circumstances of racial injustice, human-rights violations, and so much more, we know from experience across these 137 years, we cannot consistently count on others to answer this call. I do not say this to disparage anyone else's work. I say it because women in



Sue Sidney
UMW President
Southwest Texas
Conference



mission have consistently, as individuals but much more importantly as an institution, refused to back down from this work even when it's really tough."

Sometimes we join an organization because our friends belong there or it satisfies our longing for companionship, it feels right, the parties are fun, the food is good, or whatever other reasons we have.

I originally joined the Susannah Wesley Circle at Community UMC in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., because I wanted to be with a group of women with similar interests—and child care was offered.

I loved that community of women and the extravagant, supportive fellowship they provided.

Over the years I have attended many UM Women Studies—leading many when I wasn't sure what I was doing (I still think of how inadequate I felt leading the study on Revelations! What patience those partici-

pants showed me—what great discussions we had).

I attended many Schools of Christian Mission when I often didn't even realize the significance of all that was provided.

I cried over apartheid in South Africa. I was resistant to the faiths of other cultures. I was challenged to "risk" by the Rev. Kent Kepler.

I read books. I attended spiritual growth events. I met so many wonderful women and learned so much about issues in the world.

I grew to understand that empowering women in all areas of the world makes for a better world for everyone.

While I expanded my concept of mission and grew to know God so much better, I was also supporting missionaries and ministries to women, children and youth. I love United Methodist Women.

Now I am being asked to do more, to give more. How can I possibly stretch even farther?

"...Like my grandmother, Edith, and my mother, Marian, and now me the Spirit that God has given us does not make us timid; instead, His Spirit fills us with power, love and self-control." For this reason I will share more passionately the story of United Methodist Women. I will shake my UMW pompoms and raise a cheer.



The Rev. Dana Hamilton led a spiritual growth event called "Women in Waiting" in November 2006, which for 40 women from around the conference attended. Pre Advent Retreats are a meaningful time away for women to center themselves on the meaning of the Advent/Christmas seasons.

UMW Events

March

23-25 Conference Executive Committee

April

26-29 Mission Bus Trip in SWTC

June

7 Luncheon at Annual Conference - Corpus Christi
16-19 West Gulf Regional School - Winfield, Kansas

July

19-22 SWTC School of Christian Mission at Mt. Wesley Conference Center in Kerrville

August

17-19 Conference Executive Committee

October

12-13 Conference Annual Meeting - San Angelo

November

10-11 Family Pre Advent Retreat - Mt. Wesley Conference Center, Kerrville

December

28-30 Young UM Women event

Conference women tell stories of their involvement in UM Women

By Loretta Shultz

Conference Coordinator of Membership Nurture and Outreach

More than 1 million women join 25,000 local UM Women units in 63 conferences in the United States. In talking with women, it is clear that UMW has played a vital role in the lives of women from its beginning in 1869. Below are some personal comments of exciting experiences from women in our conference who show just how vital UMW has been to them.

Darlene Lowman, San Marcos: "I have enjoyed membership in UMW for 40 years—both my grandmother and mother were members. I have developed friendships through the years, and I've learned a lot through all the studies—Biblical, country and social actions. This organization has expanded my mind and my friendships."

Susan G. Rivas, Victoria: "What I love about being a UMW member is knowing that I have the support and love of all my sisters. The more involved I get, the more I extend myself beyond my local unit and the more rewarded I am."

"The greatest part is that although we are all different, we are united in our willingness to serve God and His children and reach out to those in need."

Clara Crank: "I enjoy being a member of UMW, for it is a way for me to contribute to the welfare not only of the church but the community with the gifts we have to give. The fellowship among the members is a blessing as we work together to accomplish our goal."

Geraldine Almquist, Asbury UMC, Austin: "Since 1948 the UMW has been an active organization maintaining a 5-Star status through the years. UMW is an integral part of our lives, keeping us a 'close-knit family' of caring friends. Through our studies, we are made more deeply aware of serious issues facing us today—world hunger, poverty, and the importance of peace. UMW has given us a feeling of satisfaction that, in some small way, we are doing our part."

Gerald Wallace, Simpson UMC, Austin: "I want to be with a community of women that experiences the freedom of being a whole person and develops, supports, and expands the concept of mission through global ministries of the church. United Methodist Women have a mission for God through Jesus Christ."

"I am on that mission."

Jacque Albrecht, Colonial Hills UMC, San Antonio: "After attending the School of Christian Mission, I was completely hooked. What a neat organization! I have learned about other countries, cultures, and different religions. I can't travel to other parts of the world to do mission, but I know that the money I pledge does that for me. I look forward to continuing my work and raising my 4-year-old daughter to be the best little United Methodist girl she can be."

Florence Cerda-Presley, Shepherd's Gate (Palm Heights) UMC, San Antonio: "In the late 1950's, a night circle made baby blankets for the Methodist Mission

Home in San Antonio. Later I took many jobs where I could serve the Lord and grow spiritually at the same time. Through the UMW, I have the opportunity to learn what it means when we feed the hungry and help the needy by using our God-given gifts, whether it be time, a loving and caring attitude, money, or just being there in Christian love."

Ann Schulze, North Shore UMC, Canyon Lake: "I can say that I have been involved with UMW since my birth some 85 years ago when my dad's aunt enrolled me as a member of "Little Light Bearers" when I was born. Its purpose was to pray that they might grow up to be missionaries. My mother and grandmother were very active in the Missionary Society (previous name for UMW) and when I became a clergy wife, I plunged full time into the activities of Women's Society of Christian Service (another previous name for UMW). It plays a vital core of the church and in worldwide mission programs."

Glenda Sanders, Corpus Christi: "I am so proud to be a part of a program whose purpose is mission and that advocates for women, children and youth. It was UMW that encouraged me to take leadership roles and expand my talents. My UMW sisters have been there for me in times of grief and crisis. I feel I have personal friends that I could call on in any city in the United States and a few overseas!"

Billie Rowell, Fredericksburg UMC tells of a firsthand encounter on the bus trip to Anaheim, California for the 17th Assembly of UMW.

"Marcos was a young migrant wandering in the desert around Tucson, Arizona who, driven by his dream for a better life, made his way north to further his dream in a land of opportunity. Maybe Marcos was sent by a Power that is great and wise to minister to a busload of souls too comfortable in themselves. The encounter made me appreciate just what it means to be a part of UMW, to belong to a group of women organized for mission and organized to make a difference in the world of need. I believe God moves many needing help into our comfort zone to challenge us to feed and tend His sheep, as we tried to do by offering Marcos food. Are we heeding the call? For the UMW, I say emphatically 'yes.'"

Dorothy Easley, Telferner UMC: "I love UMW because it has the ultimate purpose of learning to know God. I benefit from the studies and training. Our literature is current and keeps us in touch with the real world. I enjoy the wonderful fellowship and good times that come from doing what we feel God wants us to do in building His Kingdom on Earth. It is LOVE IN CHRIST."

Sue Sidney, Leander: "This organization most resembles Jesus and follows what He said and showed to be the way of peace in life. I also love the supportive community."

The stories you have read tell the whole story. I would like to extend an invitation to all women who are not a part of our great organization to join our UM Women's organization. There is something for everyone!

Young UM Women plan Mission Awareness event for December

By Glenda Sanders

SWTC Communications

The Rio Grande and Southwest Texas Conferences of UM Women will host a Young Women's Mission Awareness Event for women ages 12-25 at Mt. Wesley Methodist Encampment in Kerrville Dec. 28-30. Women ages 26 and older are also invited to attend as chaperones or participants, with the understanding that the curriculum will be geared towards the 25 and younger age group. The theme is "What Does the Lord Require?" based on Micah 6:8.

The three-day event will focus on mission awareness; what United Methodists believe; fun, food, fellowship; leadership skills; Bible study; worship; praise; and music.

The GODivas, an all female band from Corpus Christi, will provide the music.

Young women will have opportunities to walk an outdoor Labyrinth, hike to the Bolivian Cross and have a camp fire. Small groups will have time for sharing and making new friends from all over Texas and New Mexico.

Tentative plans are for the event to begin with check-in at 3 p.m. Dec. 28, with it concluding by 11 a.m. Dec. 30.

The registration fee is \$125 per participant. Childcare is available for children ages 5 and younger for a fee of \$60.

Talk to your local churches now about organizing fundraisers to send at least two young women per church. Plan now to arrange carpooling, travel expenses and chaperones, which are mandatory for each group.

Registration forms will be available in July. Space is limited, so plan now! For more information, contact Glenda Sanders at (361) 992-7985.



From left: The Rev. Leighann Brechin, Cheryl Meadows, the Rev. Mark Brechin and the Brechin children pose at the Family Pre-Advent retreat, themed "Twenty-Five Days of Christmas—Now the Waiting has Begun" in November. Families who attended the retreat were led by Rev. Mark and Rev. Leighann Brechin. Cheryl Meadows and Clara Clemons led the team that organized the event. Bill Meadows and Larry Fortune shared their musical talents. Twelve families attended the event intended to help families prepare for the holidays.

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Mission institutions' ownership rights, local church giving questions answered

by Rosemary Creamer
Treasurer

Recently I was asked by a district treasurer to help answer some questions that a local treasurer had asked. The district treasurer felt comfortable with some of the questions but thought that this new local treasurer needed very accurate information. I pondered the questions and knew that serving on the conference team and having been trained by the Women's Division that I wasn't an expert. I could have answered the questions but chose to seek additional expertise with the questions.

I sent the questions on to Inelda Gonzalez, Women's Division director from the Southwest Texas Conference, and Junell Treece, Mission Coordinator for Education and Interpretation and Board member of Holding Institute in Laredo.

I would like to share the questions and answers with the readers, as I think that if one local member asked these questions that others may want these answers as well.

Inelda, who serves on the finance committee of the Women's division, replied as follows:

Question 1: A 40+ year UM Women member just told me that Mission Institutions are no longer owned by Women's Division, but by GBGM. Is that right? If so, how does funding work now? I'm guessing from what I found on the GBGM Web site that mission institutions are supported by UMW and GBGM maintains mission institutions. Does this mean that UMW funds mission work and GBGM funds building maintenance?

Mission Institutions are still owned by Women's Division, maintained by WD and supported by WD. Women's Division was made a part of GBGM

Women's luncheon promises fun

The UM Women will host a luncheon during the SWTC UMC Annual Conference June 7 at 12:15 p.m. in the American Bank Center, 1901 Shoreline Drive. The lunch is titled Sharing Our Story "I am a United Methodist Woman."

Cost for the event is \$15 if reservations are made by May 15. The cost will increase to \$17 after May 15.

Free childcare and child's lunch will be provided during the luncheon with Advance Registration by May 15.

Mail a check payable to SWTC UMW, along with a form containing name, address, phone, e-mail, district, church and whether

because WD gives GBGM 32 percent of the GBGM total budget to be used to support the programming of Mission Institutions and others that seek funds not only in the United States, but also around the world. GBGM also receives donations specifying to which Mission Institution the funds are to go. Every year in every quadrennium, UMW participates in a program called Call to Prayer and Self Denial. Once every four years, the offering gathered and sent to WD is for maintenance of the Mission Institutions. Most of these Mission Institutions' buildings are old and need to be updated and maintained. Also, WD is the group responsible for providing the funds for each MI's insurance of their property.

Question 2: The same woman told me that Women's Division bylaws prohibit a UMW unit from giving to our local church. Our local giving has to be to a mission (outside local church). True?

Women's Division bylaws do not "prohibit" a UMW unit from giving to the local church; they strongly suggest that the funds you give to whomever you wish be sent to Women's Division telling them whom the funds will go to. The funds will then be sent to the place you want those funds to go. Local giving to a mission project should be sent directly to the local mission, i.e. Methodist Mission Home or Methodist Children's Home in Waco. Local units should report what they sent on their quarterly report to the district. This shows how our United Methodist Women give to missions.

Junell responded as follows to question 1:

The Women's Division owns the property and buildings of the Mission Institutions. Women's Division pays for the most maintenance and

all liability insurance for the institutions. The General Board of Global Ministries does the check writing because the funds are merged as noted on the chart on page 79 of the Local and District Units Handbook.

Now, on page 75 of this same handbook is a chart showing the use of the monies that reach Women's Division. Be sure to read the list of items in each category at the bottom of the page. In the category entitled "National Missions" you will note that community center is the first item—here is where the maintenance and liability insurance costs are taken. Mission work is funded in each of these categories, depending on the need. It is necessary for the Board of Directors of each institution to raise some money locally to support the needs of the community.

There is a pamphlet entitled "Mission Money Means" that is published at the beginning of each year that explains the use of the prior year funds. This is extremely good information for the Mission Coordinator for Education and Interpretation to have also.

United Methodist Women have a wealth of resources in which we can locate the information that we need. We need to be well informed, and I encourage you to use the handbooks, response, the reading program books and the Web site for the women's division <http://gbgm-umc.org/UMW/>. If all else fails, ask and someone from the district, conference or Women's Division to get you the answer!

Remember: As local unit members each of us is the life blood of UM Women; we join our pledge dollars to fund and support mission work around the world and here at home.



United Methodist Women Southwest Texas Conference

*The United Methodist Women
of the United Methodist
Church, Southwest Texas
Conference, compiled and paid
for this news supplement to
United Methodist Witness.*

www.gbgm-umc.org/swtxumw

childcare is needed (include the names, ages and allergies of children), to Dianne Rumfield, Registrar, 452 Cartagena Dr., Corpus Christi, TX, 78418.

Call (361) 937-5200, e-mail ldordianne@aol.com or visit www.gbgm-umc.org/swtxumw for more information.

Plan to arrive at the lunch early to purchase School of Christian Mission study books at the UMW Exhibit and to visit other exhibits and the Cokesbury Bookstore display.

For additional questions, contact Glenda Sanders, event chairperson, at (361) 992-7985 or glenda@grandecom.net.