



THE CONNECTION

Newsletter of the Rappahannock River District United Methodist Women

Number 002

April 2020

Linda Hamilton, Editor

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Hello Faithful UMW Ladies!

As most of you, I have been staying close to home. In the last few weeks, I have reflected on our UMW Purpose Statement and how we can still live it out during this time.

In the last week, I have lost someone I have known for 25 years. Her name was Neomia Taraba and to me she epitomized the woman in Titus 2 that says, "Teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good." Neomia not only taught me what is good, but she lived by example as well. Neomia was a woman with the gift of hospitality, always cooking and having people at her home. Neomia was also a woman who saw a need and met it. She and her husband, George, helped start the Knob Noster Christmas Store, which is an outreach that provides people in need with enough food to help them during the Christmas season. Neomia encouraged me to be part of this outreach and in time I became co-chairman with Neomia, which at that time was a step of faith for me. Neomia might have never been part of a Methodist Church or a UMW group, but she lived out the UMW Purpose through her life's example. At

the end of her life, we were still writing each other frequently and at the end of every letter I received, I always felt encouraged and ready to move forward with purpose.

In this time of so many unknowns, please be encouraged that God can always use people like you and me, whether through letters, phone calls, or dropping off a baked good, to build up and edify younger women to become strong in the Lord. I know I will always be grateful to God for giving me Neomia and I pray that we can live such a life that motivates others to live for God and therefore fulfill the UMW Purpose.

God, grace and peace to you,

Penny Kelly, President
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Neomia and Penny

FROM YOUR TREASURER

Hello Rappahannock River District Sisters!

Thank you all for your generosity in supporting the missions of United Methodist Women. Your Unit's giving supports missions like the Wesley Community Service Center in Portsmouth Virginia. Your giving supports missions like Emuci Fonds Exterieurs in Cote d'Ivoire that provides healthy food for children ages 6 months to 2 years and food preparation classes for mothers.

In March, as a District, we sent to the Conference \$5,729.59 for Mission Giving. This goes to our pledge of \$28,000 for the year and is a GREAT start!!!! As a District, we also sent the Conference \$362.00 for Prayer and Self Denial Offering, \$50.00 for Ferrum College Scholarship, and \$150 for United Methodist Family Services. For the March 23rd Day of Giving for the Legacy Fund we sent \$357.44. Finally, thank you for the Admin & Member Development (A&MD) Funds sent in by all of you.

As of this writing, we also have 5 Rainbow Givers! This is also a GREAT start for this category. A Rainbow giver is someone who gives an extra \$60 dollars in Mission Giving. There is a special form for this and if you would like to be a Rainbow Giver you can send the form directly to me (10619 Gannett Lane, Spotsylvania, VA 22553) since your unit may not be meeting during this time. I have asked Linda to attach the form to the Newsletter.

Finally, in this unprecedented time of

change, my first prayer is that The Lord bless you, keep you and give you peace. My next prayer is for the Lord to help me know how to reach out and connect and be available to people. With that in mind, I have learned how to do "virtual meetings" through Zoom and would love to host a "Treasurer's Tuesday" on Tuesday May 12th at 11am. We can connect and hopefully I can answer any questions you may have regarding treasurer issues. We can also lift each other up with sharing and prayer. If you would like to be a part of this, please email me and I will send you the Zoom link to get connected to this virtual meeting!

If you would like to talk with me about any questions you have feel free to call.

Stay safe. Know you are loved!

"Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord be with you all"
2 Thessalonians 3:16

Blessings to you
Peace of Christ,

Sherri Stadler, Treasurer
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FROM MEMBERSHIP, NURTURE, and OUTREACH

UMW Census

Thank you so much for completing the 2019 UMW Census for our district! I appreciate all of the time and effort you spent on this task. Our units in the Rappahannock River District are wonderful!

How Can Our UMW Units Help Each Other During This Challenging Time?

Discussing health in the church dates back to John Wesley, who wrote extensively about staying physically healthy, as well as spiritually healthy. Bishop Elaine Stanovsky, from the Greater Northwest Area of The United Methodist Church, reminds United Methodists that holding spiritual and social holiness together is a “mark of Methodist distinction.”

The Rappahannock River District UMW can strengthen its “spiritual and social holiness” by working together.

Here’s how we can do it with the Rappahannock River District UMWs:

1. First, take time to think about how your unit is connecting with each other during these challenging times.
2. Second, write down how your members are doing this.
3. Third, send one or more way(s) your unit does this to me at the e-mail or address below.

I will compile the information you send and share it with the unit presidents as well as include it in the next newsletter. We want to make a difference among our members. Working together we can keep our units strong! Thank you in advance for your help.

Peggy Schlegelmilch

pschlege@gmail.com

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Fredericksburg, VA 22408

FROM YOUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH COORDINATOR

NOTHING CAN SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF GOD! Even during this most unsettling time, God is with us; providing comfort and protection. I’m so glad that we serve a Risen Savior and he’s in the world today, even amidst these difficult times.

My prayer is that even though you may not be able to attend your place of worship, that you find peace and solace in the fact that God is with you. I encourage you ladies to continue to reach out to fellow sisters in Christ, loved ones, friends, etc., to encourage them that God knows our needs and provides for all our cares and concerns. Thanks Be to God! I have been blessed to be able to meet with some folks on Sunday mornings, keeping social distancing in mind, to give thanks, lift up prayers and to read the Word of God to help fill our souls. I pray that each of you are able to do the same in some form or fashion.

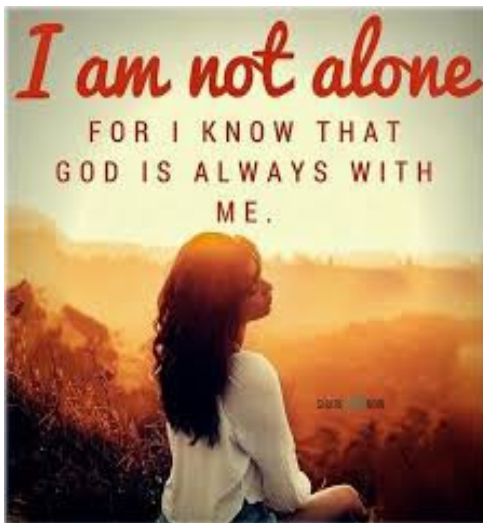
This is truly a different time. God knows what He’s doing. In a world that has become so BUSY... perhaps we have overlooked the time for peace and solitude to commune with our Lord and Savior, and now we have “not-so-Busy” time. God tells us to Be Still and Know that I am God. It’s time for us to be still, silent and listen to God speak to us. I’m thankful for this silent time as I truly can reflect on the many blessings God has provided. It’s helped to put life into perspective. Just keep smiling and let God be your face to those you can see and the voice to those who receive your calls and the blessings of your silent prayers lifted for each other.

[Deuteronomy 31:8 \(CEB\)](#) “But the LORD is the one who is marching before you! He is the one who will be with you! He won't let you down. He won't abandon you. So don't be afraid or scared!” I've looked at several versions of this verse, but this one really hit home for me by the use of the word “marching”, it confirms God's power and might, to MARCH before us as this too shall pass. Either here on this earth or in glory with Him!

My prayers continue for you all for added strength a new and a life without fear as Our God is in CONTROL!!!. Be safe and cautious to take care of yourselves and each other. Until we meet again!

Love in Christ,

Nokie Lemons
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nokwall@aol.com



FROM YOUR SOCIAL ACTION COORDINATOR

Social Action during the Pandemic

Well, I don't know about you or not; but, I have found this pandemic time of our lives a difficult adjustment to make. I live by myself and I crave human contact by way of smiles, words, and hugs. I am being careful and mindful of the ways that we should be responding during this time of opportunity. Yes, I did say opportunity. I guess you have not thought about the pandemic in regard to that term. However, this is a time that may come with some struggle but at the same time we have to make the most of it. I have to tell myself that many times on a daily basis. Solitude can be a time of getting to know yourself again and recognizing that you are not in control. We can grow from this experience for the better.

So, as you may be aware, April 22nd was a celebration of sorts for the 50th anniversary of EARTH DAY. There probably would have been more public activities in your area if we were not self-quarantined at this moment in time. Since, we have all been at home; an opportunity has come our way. It's called the great cleanout and discard moment which means recycling and re-decision time. A re-decision may simply be reusing glasses instead of plastic and paper or as I call them the throwaways. How about all those clothes that are stored in closets, boxes, suitcases, and bags that are not being worn. Why not bag them up to recycle by donation to a clothes closet. I have been going through my clothes and just wondering why I bought something and why I really needed it. This will be a

lesson for me when I am able to browse in a clothing store again. I need to ask myself do I really need it. Self-reflection is good. Be sure that you have a system of recycling in place for paper, plastic, cans, and glass. If your community doesn't have a place setup for receiving these items; be proactive with your community leaders.

If you can, get outside and either sit in the fresh air or take a lovely walk. You can get some great ideas of ways that you help yourself or someone in your community. Call someone who lives by themselves and check on them. Remember, the word social as defined by the dictionary means "relating to society" or "needing companionship". It is simply a connection with each other. Here's an action, call someone who doesn't drive anymore and see if you can get some groceries for them. There are lots of ways that we can be proactive and this is social action.

As Jesus said to his disciples, "Peace, be with you."

Suzanne Shrader
Social Action Coordinator



FROM THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

All of us from the Nominations Committee wish our UMW sisters continued health.

Please reach out with rosters of your units to Karenwrobison@gmail.com.

In these unusual times, especially now, it is wonderfully satisfying to connect via Zoom, email, text and many of the media platforms out there. Posting a letter has taken on a new meaning for me too. I find myself writing friends, using pen and paper!

God is good and soon we will all gather.

Yours in Christ,

Karen Robinson, Chair

COMMUNICATIONS-NEWSLETTER

Several weeks ago while getting online to attend my church's online worship, I was thinking about what I missed most from the usual Sunday worship services. It was communion! It seemed so long ago that I had participated in our monthly communion service. On that Sunday, our pastor, Justin Williams, included the following story during his sermon:

Thomas Pettepiece, a Methodist pastor, was a political prisoner, a prisoner of conscience. Pettepiece writes of his first Easter Sunday spent in prison. He was among 10,000 prisoners. Most of the men had lost everything: their homes, their jobs, their furniture, their contact with their families. It was Easter Sunday, and they wanted to celebrate

Communion. But, they had no cup for Communion. They had no wine for Communion. They didn't even have water for Communion. Nor did they have any bread for the Sacrament.

“So, they practiced the Communion of Empty Hands. ‘This meal in which we take part,’ Pettepeice said, ‘reminds us of the imprisonment, the torture, the death and final victory of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The bread is the body which he gave for humanity. The fact that we have none represents very well the lack of bread in the hunger of so many millions of human beings. The wine, which we don’t have today, is his blood, and represents our dream of a united humanity, of a just society, without difference of race or class.’

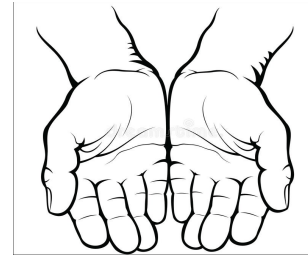
“Then Pettepiece, the pastor, held out his empty hand to the next person on his right, and passed on the imaginary loaf. Each one took a piece and passed it on. Then he said, ‘Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And together they ate the imaginary bread, trying to imagine tasting it. After a moment they passed around the non-existent chalice, each imagining he was drinking from it. ‘Take, drink, this is the blood of Christ which was shed for you ... Let us give thanks, sure that Christ is here with us, strengthening us.’”

So let us practice the Communion of Empty Hands. Hold your empty hands in front of you and think of Jesus' words, “Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” Then raise your hands to your mouth. Then hold the invisible cup in your hands, raise it to your mouth and remember the words, “Take, drink, this

is the blood of Christ which was shed for you.”

God bless and keep you all,

Linda Hamilton
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lindajo54@yahoo.com



FROM YOUR HISTORIAN

Happy Easter! Although our church buildings were empty, so is the TOMB! Hallelujah! Praise God that we are Easter people!

As your RRD UMW historian, I have completed my first pass going through all the items turned over to me by various persons. As much as possible, I have saved information electronically. That entailed taking lots of paper and scanning it in. Fortunately, I wasn't under any specified timeline to get it done, so I plodded along until I completed a first pass through all the material.

So, what do I have, you ask? For the most part, I have an electronic copy of the District UMW Handbooks, beginning when we were the Fredericksburg District UMW and continuing as the Rappahannock River District UMW. I have saved all the minutes of District

UMW Executive committee meeting that I had or was given. And I saved all copies of newsletters that I found.

In addition, I put together a notebook of all the certificates that I came across, such as Living Into Our Purpose, Reading Program Awards, 5 and 6 star giving, etc. These certificates were presented to us as a District UMW at Virginia Conference UMW Annual meetings. I hope to bring that notebook to future RRD UMW Annual meetings for you to enjoy looking through at your leisure.

If you have material that you wish to be included in the RRD UMW archives, I am happy to receive it from you. Please feel free to contact me regarding transferring the material to me.

I may be reached via email at jmcg5580@va.metrocast.net or via cell phone at 540-273-8934.

I pray that each of you is WELL and look forward to the time when we may once again be together.

Blessings,
J.M. (Julia-Meade) Gallier,
RRD UMW Historian

AFTON UMW

What a perfect time to take an adventure! Who doesn't want to get away from all that is going on around us. All you have to do is open a book from our 2020 Reading Program and see where it takes you. I asked our Afton United Methodist Women to open a book and start reading. I advised them that it is one of the best ways to spend some of our time while being confined to home. I have always loved a good book

and the last couple of years the selection from our Reading Program has not let me down. A few years ago we had only one person participating in the Reading Program, but last year we really blossomed. Out of a small group of eight full time members, six read five or more books! I certainly was a proud "Mother Hen" when I handed each of them their certificates for their accomplishments in the Reading Program. This year who knows with all this down time, being confined to home I might be handing out eight certificates! We shall see. HAPPY READING!!

Diane Mahan,
Reading Program Coordinator



FREDERICKSBURG UMW

"To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under Heaven"
Ecclesiastes 3:1

We are living in a time that none of us have experienced before, one that has united a world under threat into a global community where the United Nations has called for a truce of all conflict and the planet has begun to heal itself from the damage we have caused to it. Like it or not, our lives have changed. Perhaps it was time. Perhaps it was time for us to reassess what is important, what is essential, and what is simply icing on the cake we didn't need in the first place. It is a time to learn something that the "have nots" of this world have always know; it's not about wealth, or even health, it's about relationship.

Fredericksburg UMC, as with many other churches across the globe, has made an appaudable effort to continue its ministries to the best of its ability, via live streaming, Zoom calls, pick-up and drop-off's, and simple phone calls. The UMW, although we have not been meeting in person, has maintained its functions as best we can. People who did not like to touch a computer have become adept at participating in meetings via Zoom and other forms of virtual media. Women, who generally tend to put others' needs before their own, in an effort to keep their own spirits lifted have begun to share motivational and spiritual thoughts and ideas by sharing emails and messages like "Sunday Silliness" where they list the simple joys they have experienced during the week; a good recipe, a pattern for masks, the daffodils blooming in the yard, a glorious sunset, and where they feel the presence of God.

While we continue to stay in the safety of our homes we are also mindful of those who are homeless. Volunteering to distribute food, going through closets for clothing donations, sewing masks, and finding other ways to fulfill the needs of "the least of these" have become even higher on our agendas. This is as it should be. This is what Jesus called us to do all along. We joke that haircuts, makeup, even getting dressed in the morning, have all taken a backseat. Our focus has turned outward rather than on ourselves. When people ask, "Where is God in all this?" perhaps that is what God wants us to see. Perhaps God wants us to see the needs of others rather than our own "wants." Perhaps God wants us to find joy in baking hundreds of cookies for the hospital workers and law enforcement

officers who are risking their lives to protect ours. Perhaps God wants us to learn what real compassion is as we long to hold the hand of a friend who has lost a loved one, but are denied even that simple kindness. Perhaps God wants us to take the time to look at the evening sky and remember that God has created all things, and that to everything there is a season. We pray that we can continue to find God all around us, but especially in each other.

Janet Lahr Lewis, Vice President



TRINITY UMW

This Saturday was a big day for the Trinity UMW (Trinity Catlett) Ladies. A "Spring Fling" was planned, but now we can only talk with each other on the phone, E-Mail or other. We cannot touch each other! We are staying at home. We love each other from a distance. We receive from our pastor sermons recorded for each week, not knowing when we can return to church. As the President, I wish the district ladies a safe and healthful day. May God add his blessings upon us all. Thanks be to God!

Nancy Lee Smith
President, Trinity UMW

KILMARNOCK UMW

Hello,

I have been talking with many of our members and it has been great to stay connected in this time of anxiety and fear. Below is an article written as Outreach Chair that others may find comforting and inspiring -- ways to reach out to each other, connect with our neighbors and make the world a better place. Please consider this for the upcoming email Congregational Concerns if you have room. Thanks so much!

Connections, Care and Kindness - What Each of Us Can Do!

In this challenging time for all of us, we often may feel the need to reach out and let others know we are thinking of them. This is not limited to family or church members but should also include our neighbors, community and country. There are many ways to touch the lives of others and as Outreach Committee Chair I would like to plant some seeds of ideas for your consideration. Here's what you can do.

1. Reach out to neighbors and offer to pick up groceries for them and others in your neighborhood. If you are ordering on line for curbside pickup it is easy to pick up a few more items and deliver them to doorsteps while respecting social-distancing needs. This has the additional benefit of minimizing the numbers of people who need to frequent grocery stores.
2. We have all gotten creative with our cooking lately and cooking from what you have on hand is our "new normal." So share new recipes and find out what others have been experimenting with.
3. Our yards look spectacular this year so share some blooms or small arrangements (or photos) with others along with a small note and/or prayer.
4. If you know how to make masks, perhaps offer to make them for neighbors and friends and deliver them to their mail boxes. I just found a quick and easy way to make them with paper towels and rubber bands (and they are disposable). What's not to like?
5. Everyone loves to receive a thoughtful note. You can mail cards to friends or consider putting a couple of cards and envelopes in a slightly larger envelop and mail them off for others to use and show their care. This would also work well for members of our Armed Forces if you have a relative or friend serving today. It expands our circle of caring in so many ways!
6. If you are in a leadership position, reach out to your committee members or Sunday School class members and let them know you are thinking of them (Lucy Martin recently did this with phone calls and message for Palm Sunday to her Sunday School class mates). These calls mean so much and keep us connected on a very personal level. And while you are making calls, talk to old friends as

often as you can - the warmth of their voice will touch your soul!

7. Lastly, don't forget your prayer partners and share Easter wishes and prayers. You can use this to reach former Prayer Partners as well.

I am sure you have many other creative ideas as well so share them and let's care, connect and be kind!

Betty Riley shared with me that she just received a book from a kind member of our church who is always thinking of her (and she is not Betty's prayer partner). "Sending you Easter blessings especially now as we live in a world of fear. Pray that God will cover us with his grace and peace and bless our hearts and home with his comfort." Nice, isn't it?

I once heard that God never gives us anything we can't handle and I think he is right. We can handle this virus while reaching out, coming together as a church and demonstrating the heartfelt care that is a cornerstone of our church family. Good luck and if you find something that works for you, share it in the weekly email. They are all small steps but can have a big impact on others!

I'd also like to share something else with you. I do not know who wrote this but it is lovely. So I share it with you--I am thankful my Lord, God is MY Shepherd too.

Every once in a while, an ewe will give birth to a lamb and reject it. There are many reasons she may do this. Once a ewe rejects one of her lambs, she will never change her mind. These little lambs will hang their heads so low that it

looks like something is wrong with its neck. Their spirit is broken. These lambs are called "bummer lambs."

Unless the shepherd intervenes, that lamb will die, rejected and alone. So, do you know what the shepherd does? He takes that rejected little one into his home, handfeeds it and keeps it warm by the fire. He will wrap it with blankets and hold it to his chest so the bummer can hear his heartbeat. Once the lamb is strong enough, the shepherd will place it back in the field with the rest of the flock.

But that sheep never forgets how the shepherd cared for him when his mother rejected him. When the shepherd calls for the flock, guess who runs to him first? That's right, the bummer sheep. He knows his voice intimately--It is not that the bummer lamb is loved more, it just knows intimately the one who loves it.....It's not that it is loved more, it just believes it because it has experienced that love one on one.

So many of us are bummer lambs, rejected and broken. But He is the good Shepherd. He cares for our every need and holds us close to His heart so we can hear His heartbeat. We may be broken but we are deeply loved by the Shepherd.

The Lord is MY shepherd... I'm a bummer lamb.

Jo Manson, President
KUMW



Upcoming Events
(These dates may change)

September 11-12	VA UMW Young Women's Retreat, Camp Overlook, Keezletown
TBA	UMW Breakfast at Annual Conference – Place TBA
September 26	RRD UMW Annual Meeting
October 24	VA UMW 48 th Annual Meeting, Smith Mountain Lake 4H Center
November 7	RRD UMW Harvest Prayer Breakfast, Henderson UMC
December 5	RRD UMW Advent Prayer Breakfast, McKendree UMC





Rappahannock River District Office
United Methodist Women
P. O. Box 100
Ladysmith, VA 22501



***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.***