



United  
Women  
in Faith

River Valley United Women in Faith's

# THE LINK

Linking together the members of the River Valley District (RVD)

Volume 31, Issue 2

August 2024



Jane Baker

## Greetings from our District President...

Dear United Women in Faith Sisters— I look forward to seeing all of you in person **Saturday, September 14**, at our Annual Gathering at **Owatonna UMC**. To make planning easier for our host unit, please register before the September 7 deadline.

**“Anticipating our Future—Honoring our Past”** is our theme for the day. We look forward to 2025 as we elect and install officers and approve a budget for the year, and learn about Emma Norton’s new building, programs, and plans from our Emma Norton representative, Ann Girres. We honor our past with our Remembrance Service (please bring names of women from your church who have passed away during this year) and hear reports from our officers about UWFaith activities this year.

As of this writing, I know nothing about our conference’s United Women in Faith redistricting plan. The Visioning Retreat in August should make the process more clear. More information will be available at our district gathering in Owatonna.

We need your help in 2025. Our district’s **slate of officers is not filled**. If you are inspired to volunteer, please contact me or Janet Ewing (CON) for more information. Being an officer is a wonderful opportunity to work and have fun with other women in our district. We also need **units to host** our spring and fall gatherings. Hosting is a great way to serve your district. Please consider the opportunity and get more information from me. May we strive for more participation in the coming year!

As United Women in Faith, we are called to put our faith into action in everything we do, wherever we are, individually and together. We must answer this call!

Until I see you September 14, I send you Blessings and Love.

Your President,

Jane Baker, RVD United Women in Faith  
janekbaker@yahoo.com or 651-764-2505



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Plan to attend our **ANNUAL GATHERING** on **SATURDAY, September 14**

9:00am—2:30pm

United Methodist Church—Owatonna, Minnesota

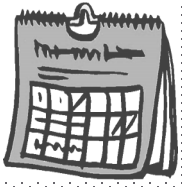
See Gathering information on pages 18-19.

Registrations are due by **SEPTEMBER 7**.



### MISSION STATEMENT OF UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship and education so that they can inspire, influence, and impact local and global communities.



✂ clip and save ✂

### What's on our calendar? Gathering Dates

#### District, Conference & Other Events

#### 2024

**Sept. 14** River Valley District Annual Gathering  
*(Saturday) Owatonna UMC in Owatonna*

**Oct. 5** MN Conference Annual Fall Gathering  
*(Saturday) for ALL United Women in Faith  
Centennial UMC in Roseville*

**Oct. 5-6** Leadership Development Retreat (LDR)  
*(Saturday & Sunday) for All Conference & District Officers  
Centennial UMC in Roseville*

#### 2026

**May 15-17** UWFaith Assembly 2026  
*Indianapolis, Indiana*

### Attention all Conference & District Officers!

### Leadership Development Retreat

**Oct. 5-6, 2024**

The **Leadership Development Retreat** will be held on **October 5-6** at **Centennial UMC in Roseville**.

Once again, this will be in combination with the Conference Fall Gathering rather than a separate event. All officers will receive LDR registration and lodging information in mid-August. Registration will be online and should be completed as soon as possible. Leadership development is an important component of serving as an officer in United Women in Faith. Plan now to attend this fun and informative event!



### Conference Annual Fall Gathering

For ALL United Women in Faith

**Saturday, October 5, 2024**

9:00am-2:30pm

Centennial UMC

1524 Co. Rd. C2 W, Roseville

***“Climate Justice &  
Environmental Racism”***

***Guest Speaker: Ilka Vega***

Executive for Economic and Environmental Justice

UWFaith National Office

**Environmental racism** is a type of inequality where people in communities of color face a disproportionate risk of exposure to pollution and related health conditions. In the United States, environmental racism negatively affects Black Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Latino populations. Protecting God’s creation and those who are disproportionately affected by the climate crises is more than our belief as United Women in Faith; it is one of our core principles and a matter of justice!

Our guest speaker, Ilka Vega, is the Executive for Economic and Environmental Justice at UWFaith National. She will present an overview of the *Just Energy for All* campaign, its achievements over the past six years, and how our organization is addressing environmental racism. Also joining us will be a presenter from Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light to talk about how our churches can become certified *Climate Justice Congregations*. Be sure to join us for an informative and fun day!

**Registration information** will be in the September *Fresh Connection* and on the Minnesota Conference UWFaith Website. <https://www.uwfaithmn.com/>

*Submitted by Linda Kotschevar, Minnesota Conference UWFaith Program Coordinator*

*jlkotsch2@gmail.com or 320-252-3827*

# RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT LEADERSHIP 2024

*Color Purple*

## River Valley District Elected Leadership

PRESIDENT:

**Jane Baker**, 727 Hi Park, Red Wing MN 55066. 651-388-9127 (h); 651-764-2505 (c). janebaker@yahoo.com

SECRETARY (Acting):

**Virginia (Ginny) Vandervest**, 17750 Blackbird Trail, Hastings MN 55033. 651-437-7614 (h); 651-983-4872 (c). vvanderves@gmail.com

CO-TREASURER (Acting):

**Teri Arnold**, 10995 Equine Dr, St Charles MN 55972. 507-273-3812. jonandteriarnold@hotmail.com

CO-TREASURER (Acting):

**Deborah Jensen**, 6304 30<sup>th</sup> Ave NW, Rochester MN 55901. 815-535-3710. debjen\_mad@yahoo.com

CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS (Acting):

**Janet Ewing**, 5995 133<sup>rd</sup> St Ct W, Apple Valley MN 55124. 952-431-7751 (h); 612-384-6411 (c). janete9@charter.net

## Committee on Nominations

CLASS OF 2024: **Janet Ewing** (see above)

CLASS OF 2025: **OPEN**

CLASS OF 2026: **OPEN**

CLASS OF 2027: **OPEN**

## River Valley District Appointed Leadership

SOCIAL ACTION:

**Diana Eickelberg**, 25 Harmony Ct, Lake City MN 55041. 507-358-9576. deickelberg1@gmail.com

EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION:

**Nancy Iverson**, 16970 Whitewood Ave, Prior Lake MN 55372. 612-747-1630. undothree@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR (Acting):

**Sharon Dougherty**, 14150 Woodchuck Trl, Prior Lake MN 55372. 612-280-2103. sdsrdougherty@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP NURTURE & OUTREACH:

**Thalia Duffield**, 605 Southbridge Dr, Northfield MN 55057. 218-839-9314. thaliakduffield@gmail.com

SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

**Carolyn Winslow**, 1393 Clippership Alcove, Woodbury MN 55125. 651-245-2564. caring@thegrovemn.church

RESOURCE MANAGER/LENDING LIBRARIAN:

**Connie Scott**, SEE CONNIE'S REPORT ON PAGE 10 FOR CONTACT INFO. 507-456-3073. connielulu55@msn.com

PROGRAM COORDINATOR: **OPEN**

HISTORIAN: **OPEN**

## Emma Norton Representative: (Acting):

**Ann Girres**, 4848 Steeplechase Cr, Eagan MN 55122. 651-303-6204. anngirres@gmail.com

## RV District Superintendent:

Rev. Michelle Hargrave, 612-230-6153. michelle.hargrave@minnesotaumc.org

## Conference Leadership:

Jane Baker      Christie Brown      Elizabeth Everitt (NCJ)      Catherine Williams

# MONEY MATTERS FROM OUR DISTRICT CO-TREASURERS

Greetings UWFaith Sisters!

We have passed the midpoint of the year, so a few notes. Just an FYI: As you can see in the first half of the year report below, donations for Missions are \$14,494.62. Our pledge for 2024 is \$40,000 so we have given 36% of our pledge. For Emma Norton Services, we have given \$2,561.48. Our goal was \$10,000, so we have given 26%. We thank you for your hard work, and hope that you and your units have a great, blessed successful second half of 2024.



*Deb Jensen*



*Teri Arnold*

It may seem like a good idea to submit your **remittances** at the end of each year; however, it really helps the District and Conference treasurers if you send them in by the beginning of December at the latest. This gives us time to post them and send them to the next appropriate level. Deb, Linda Oberg and Teri really appreciate your efforts!

We believe it has been mentioned before that **rules for giving** have changed. Any donation that is a defined UWFaith project should still be submitted to the District Treasurer. The main items are Pledge to Mission, Special Mission Recognition (SMR), Gift To Mission (GTM), Gift in Memory (GIM), World Thank Offering (WTO), Love Offering, Call to Prayer, Emma Norton Services, Mission u, and Assembly. The Legacy Fund should be sent directly to National to this address: United Women in Faith, Attn: Legacy, Church Center for the United Nations, 777 United Nations Plaza, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10017. All other missions should be sent directly to that mission. A good example is Ronald McDonald House. If you have questions on a specific mission, please send an email to Deb Jensen ([debjen\\_mad@yahoo.com](mailto:debjen_mad@yahoo.com)) and Teri Arnold ([jonandteriarnold@hotmail.com](mailto:jonandteriarnold@hotmail.com)). We will investigate and let you know.

If you need copies of remit or SMR forms, please send a request to either of the email addresses above. Please specify if you want paper or electronic copies. It is important that we get remittance forms so we credit the appropriate line item. Thanks.

**We are both available to help local treasurers with any finance questions. We will work to find appropriate answers.** Emails do work well so we can investigate if necessary, but we are also happy to take phone calls – Deb’s number is 815-535-3710 and Teri’s is 507-273-3812. We do ask that you leave a message if we are not able to get to the phone - that way we know who is calling.

We hope your summer is going well and that the rest of your year is filled with blessings!

***Deb Jensen and Teri Arnold***  
***RV District Co-Treasurers***

<b>Balance on Hand January 1, 2024</b>			<b>\$ 563.09</b>
<b>Income</b>			
<b>Mission</b>	\$ 14,494.62		
<b>Emma Norton Services</b>	\$ 2,561.48		
<b>Administration &amp; Member Development</b>	\$ 560.00		
<b>Total Income Quarters 1 &amp; 2</b>		\$ 17,616.10	
<b>Expense</b>			
<b>Mission</b>	\$ 320.00		
<b>Administration &amp; Member Development</b>	\$ 3,611.98		
<b>Total Expense Quarters 1 &amp; 2</b>		\$ 3,931.98	
<b>Balance on Hand July 1, 2024</b>			<b>\$ 14,247.21</b>

## COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS



Janet Ewing

As a District officer, you have opportunities to grow spiritually, intellectually, socially and in leadership skills. Working together we continue to serve God's will and purpose in the world by improving individual lives, families, and communities through the programs that are sponsored by United Women in Faith. The District officers work as a team supporting each other. Computer skills for email and Zoom are useful and can be learned. As we age, it is recommended and important to learn new skills and continue to have social contacts. Each officer contributes their own style to the office but follows basic guidelines. Sorry, as you can see I am a detail person, and I have more details for each position. Call or email, if interested, leave a message.

### Volunteers and recommendations are greatly appreciated.

Thank you for those continuing and for new officers. Several spots still need to be filled. Who would fit in? You? It is always a learning process, especially the first year, but as a team we work together, help each other and appreciate each other.

Here are some general responsibilities and some perks for members of the team:

**Leadership Responsibilities:** Attend & participate in meetings, executive meetings (some will be via Zoom), attend Conference Annual Gathering and Conference Leadership Training, usually the first Saturday in October. Inform the District President if you are unable to attend. Contribute articles to the district newsletter. Provide training for local officers. May provide a short mission moment relation to their position at each district meeting. Attendance at one session of Mission u is strongly encouraged.

**Leadership Perks:** Expenses of your office are paid from the Administrative & Development Funds. Registrations must be made by the deadline for the district to pay expenses. You must register for meetings, voucher mileage, voucher Mission u registration & mileage, *response* magazine and other expenses of your office. Sharing rides to events is encouraged and saves mileage payments.

**TERMS of OFFICE:** Elected offices are for a two-year term, with the option of serving another 2nd term in the same office. Appointed officers are now one year at a time, with a limit of four years in the same office. Tenure is serving a total of 8 years (2 or more offices) unless a woman is elected as President. Committee on Nominations can be up to four years and does not count towards tenure. Someone who has served tenure, after four years may serve in a different office for one term, 2 years.

**TREASURER'S** responsibilities are currently set up for two people. Are you a numbers person or an accountant? We need you! One person accepts, deposits and issues all monies. The second person does all the recording/bookwork, currently in Excel (or use another bookkeeping program) and presents information at Executive Committee meetings and yearly reports including the audit. This position is for two years but is usually continued for 2 more years, even an additional (3rd) two-year term is available.

**NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE:** Identify & recruit officers as needed that reflect the diversity of the membership. Explain fully the job responsibilities, descriptions are available, time commitment, dates of meeting, attendance requirements. Ideally this committee shall have a totaling membership of eight (8) divided into four (4) classes. The chair should have 2-3 years remaining on the committee, serving as Chair for two years only.

See COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS on page 6 →

←COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS from pg 5

**PROGRAM COORDINATOR** plans with the help of the Leadership Team, the logistics of the Spring and Annual Gatherings with a theme. Publicizes the meetings in the district newsletter, develops, coordinates and prints programs for each event. More details available. National social issues are often themes.

**Social Action Coordinator:** provides education to members to understand how, why and where they can participate in activities that could provide change in social issues. The national office usually has three main issues on which to focus. Current issues are Climate Justice, Social Justice and Soul Care.

**Education and Interpretation Coordinator:** provides a short mission moment at each district meeting, helps members understand where the money goes and provides displays. She encourages local units to participate in "Mission Today," receives the reports and awards the certificates.

Please pray and discern how we can use your talents.

Volunteers and recommendations are greatly appreciated.

**Please contact me, Janet Ewing, Chair of the committee on Nominations. Email at [janete9@charter.net](mailto:janete9@charter.net) or leave a message: home # 952-431-7751 or cell # 612-384-6411.**

"If you believe in the mission of UWFaith here and around the world, if you want to help keep Minnesota's UWFaith strong, consider being on the leadership team. It's fun and rewarding getting to know new people, their talents, and their interests". —Mary Jane Reetz, Minnesota Conference Committee on Nominations Chair

**Janet Ewing, Chair (Acting)**

**RV District Committee on Nominations**



## MEMBERSHIP NURTURE & OUTREACH (MN&O)



*Thalia Duffield*

Summer greetings to all!! I hope you have had enough rain, without too much. Strange how we were talking about very dry weather not so long ago.



As your new District MN&O officer, I realize that most of you have not heard from me yet. I'm in the process of finding out who is still part of the River Valley district. However, in the meantime I'm just working with last year's list and learning along the way.

As we all know, we will be going from 5 to 4 districts in Minnesota, which will make more changes in addition to those churches who have already opted out of the United Methodist Church. River Valley will lose some churches and also gain some, probably gaining from the Metro area.

With all of this said, my hope is that you will feel free to contact me with ways that I can be of help to your units. I'm anxious to hear of your projects and think it is important to share this information with others. I always enjoy reading about projects in the newsletters.

Until we meet in person, at your unit meetings, or at a district or conference meeting, please feel free to contact me with your questions or concerns. I'd love to hear from you ([thaliakduffield@gmail.com](mailto:thaliakduffield@gmail.com) or 218-839-9314).

*Thalia Duffield,*

*RV Membership Nurture & Outreach*



*Do everything with a good heart  
and expect nothing in return and  
you will never be disappointed.*



United Women in Faith

# RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT

## DISTRICT OFFICE Application

### Applicant Information

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Last First M.I.*

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*City State ZIP Code*

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_ Church & City: \_\_\_\_\_

Position Applied for: \_\_\_\_\_

- President
- Program Coordinator
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Nominations Chair
- Nominations Committee Members
- Social Action Coordinator
- Spiritual Growth Coordinator
- Education and Interpretation
- Membership Nurture and Outreach
- Communications Coordinator
- Emma Norton Representative
- District Historian
- Resource Manager/Lending Librarian

### EDUCATION, WORK AND COMPUTER SKILLS

POSITIONS HELD IN YOUR CHURCH, COMMUNITY, OTHER ORGANIZATIONS  
(CONTINUE INFORMATION ON THE BACK OF THIS FORM)

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

RETURN TO: JANET EWING, 5995 133RD ST CT W, APPLE VALLEY MN 55124 or EMAIL: [janete9@charter.net](mailto:janete9@charter.net)

# SPIRITUAL GROWTH



Carolyn Winslow

## Discerning God's Call on Your Life

*"Be who it is God created you to be and you will set the world on fire"*

(Catherine of Siena, 14th century Catholic Italian mystic)



I share that quote of Catherine of Siena's on numerous high school graduation cards, encouraging graduates to embrace their unique mission in life, as they respond to the call to be their deepest and truest selves in response to being created, known and loved by God. Of course, like most sentiments expressed on cards, this reality can be far more challenging to attain. Discovering what we are meant to be and do isn't just for high school graduates starting out in life. It's a question that we all return to numerous times over our lifetime.

To discern is to diligently search and examine. A discerning mind demonstrates wisdom gained from knowledge and learned experience, as well as insight beyond what is seen and heard. In the Christian faith, discernment involves seeking God's guidance and is a gift of the Holy Spirit. It involves relying on God's wisdom and making choices aligned with God's purposes.

In the notable Biblical example recorded in 1 Kings 3:9 ("So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong."), King Solomon asks God for wisdom to rule God's people. This prayer of Solomon's pleases God, who not only gives him wisdom, but also riches and honor.

Entire books have been written about the process of spiritual discernment, but basically it involves listening for God's direction and guidance for our lives. This requires that we be tuned into God's voice through the reading of Scripture, prayer (speaking and listening – personally, I find contemplative prayer practices to be very helpful in this), reflecting on what we believe we have heard from God, and speaking to other people of faith, whose wisdom and insights we respect.

In their book, "Stretch out Your Hand, Exploring Healing Prayer", authors Tilda Norberg and Rober Webber write, "God speaks in many different ways, and grace gives us the eyes to see and the ears to hear...The important thing is to pray for the grace to know God's voice, to test it a bit, and then to act in faith on the discernment given, trusting that God will correct us if we have not heard quite clearly."

In 2016 I was discerning a call to serve as a Deaconess in the United Methodist Church. As a part of discerning my call to this life-time commitment to full-time ministries of love, justice and service I attended a UMW Lay Leadership Days event in Arizona, where I was given the opportunity to learn more about the Deaconess Home Missioner Order, ask questions, and seek guidance from other people of faith. That was a part of my process to clarify my call to the DHM Order. By the way, if you believe God may be calling you to serve as a Deaconess Home Missioner in the United Methodist Church, you have an opportunity to attend a virtual discernment event, "Who Am I Called to Be", being held over zoom on October 26. Please see the event flyer in this newsletter for more information. (on page 9)

Whatever it is that God is calling you to be and do in this world, I pray for God's clarity and guidance for you as you pursue that calling.

"A Prayer of Unknowing" by Thomas Merton (pg. 79, "Thoughts in Solitude") My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following Your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that, if I do this, You will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust You always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for You are ever with me, and You will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen.

**Carolyn Winslow, RV District Spiritual Growth Coordinator**  
**caring@thegrovern.church or 651-245-2564**





UNITED METHODIST  
OFFICE OF DEACONESS AND  
HOME MISSIONER



# Virtual Discernment Event Who I am Called to Be

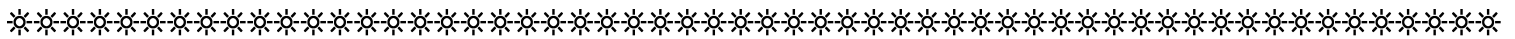
For laity in the United Methodist Church who feel called by God to make a life-time commitment to full-time ministries of love, justice and service, there is an opportunity to become part of a covenant community.

**Join us on October 26, 2024 at 12:00 PM Central Time to learn more.**

Register here: <https://tinyurl.com/DHMOct2024>

## Join the Movement

For more information, email [deaconess@uwfaith.org](mailto:deaconess@uwfaith.org)



Carolyn also shares this with us...

### Creation's Messages (an outdoor mindfulness meditation)

"Nature is always ready to teach us something. We just need to learn to listen. Whether it's a lesson in harmony, simplicity, strength, patience, or generosity, there's so much to be discovered if we're willing to tune in. Today, find a place to sit outside for at least 10 minutes. Keep your eyes open and see what nature offers up. Bring your attention to the earth, the sky, the animals, the plants, and the trees. If you find your mind drifting off to something else, just gently bring it back to the present moment. What are you experiencing? What do you think Creation is trying to tell you?"

(taken from "nature meditations" by Kenya Jackson-Saulters, [www.chroniclebooks.com](http://www.chroniclebooks.com))

**Every day is a  
NEW BEGINNING...  
take a deep Breath  
and Start Again**



This Is Your Newsletter! And we'd love your submissions! Do you have something you would like to see in the Newsletter? Do you have any suggestions? Perhaps you have items about your UWFaith unit's activities. **Please submit them to our District Communications Coordinator.**

# UW Faith READING PROGRAM



## Important News!

My husband, Patrick, and I will be moving to Mankato in September. We are excited about the new opportunities we will have but sad about the many friends we will be further away from. Many things will be different but some things will not change.

The Lending Library will still be available! There may be some changes - details to come at a later date – but the current plan is for me to continue as the Lending Librarian in the district.

**If you have books checked out from the Lending Library, please return them to me at our Shakopee address no later than August 31<sup>st</sup> OR HOLD THEM until October 1<sup>st</sup> and send to me at our new address in Mankato as the post office will not forward media mail. I would also appreciate receiving an email from you when you are mailing a book back so that I can watch for it or give you an update on which address to use.**

The **zoom book club** will also continue after our move. We will discuss *Land of Silence*, by Tessa Afshar on **September 9<sup>th</sup>** and *Conditional Citizens: On Belonging in America*, by Laila Lalami on **November 11<sup>th</sup>**. Our book selections for discussions in 2025 will be announced in the fall. If you would like to join our discussion group, contact me and I will add you to the link.

I will continue to give presentations on the UW Faith Reading Program, Lending Library, and zoom book discussions at unit meetings. Contact me for more info.

Remember, if you attend Mission u (in person or by zoom) or if you lead a Mission u class, you can count reading the curriculum book as BONUS credit (2 books). If you are not in a class, it counts for 1 credit.

## Important Dates!

September 6<sup>th</sup> - National Read A Book Day



Last Week of September: Read Banned Books Week

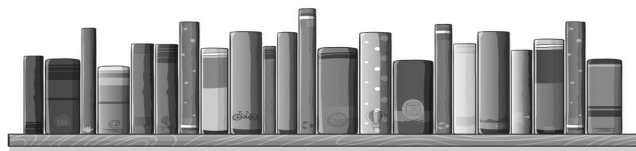
<u>August Address:</u>	<u>September:</u>	<u>October+ Address:</u>
500 Sommerville St. S. #102 Shakopee, MN 55379	MOVING ALL MONTH – DO NOT MAIL BOOKS!	700 Agency Trail #305 Mankato, MN 56001

My favorite books this summer were:

<i>The Girl With Seven Names</i>	<i>The Seed Keepers</i>	<i>The New American</i>
<i>Defiant: What The Women of Exodus Teach Us About Freedom</i>		<i>The Book of Rosy</i>
<i>I Am You – A Book About Ubuntu Echoes of Grace</i>		<i>I Am A Girl From Africa</i>

Happy Reading!

**Connie Scott,**  
**RV District Lending Librarian**  
**connielulu55@msn.com or 507-456-3073**



## United Women in Faith Reading Program Recognition

Certificates of Recognition for **2023** were awarded to the following individuals at our 2024 RVD Spring Gathering in St. Charles:

Plan IV – 20 books a year

**Connie Scott, Holy Trinity UMC-Prior Lake**

Plan III – 15 books a year

**Jane Baker, First UMC, Red Wing**

**Janet Ewing, The Well UMC-Rosemount**

Plan II – 10 books a year

**Thalia Duffield, Northfield UMC**

Plan I – 5 books a year

**Nancy Iverson, Holy Trinity UMC-Prior Lake**

**Kay Aune, Homestead UMC-Rochester**

**Marie House, Homestead UMC-Rochester**

**Betty Lee, Homestead UMC-Rochester**

**Lynn Gryc, Northfield UMC**

**Dorothy Orde, Northfield UMC**

**Catherine Williams, Northfield UMC**

**Ginny Vandervest, Resurrection UMC-Hastings**

These 12 readers read a combined total of over 100 books in 2023!

*Congratulations Readers!*



## United Women in Faith Mission Today Awards

Certificates of Recognition for **2023** were awarded to the following units at our 2024 RVD Spring Gathering in St. Charles:

**First UWFaith—Red Wing**

**Holy Trinity UWFaith—Prior Lake**

**Homestead UWFaith—Rochester**

**Immanuel UWFaith—Winona**

**Northfield UWFaith—Northfield**

**Zion UWFaith—Sargeant**

*Congratulations UWFaith Units!*

For questions regarding the **United Women in Faith Reading Program**, please contact Connie Scott. Her contact information is included in her report on page 10.

For questions regarding the **Mission Today 2024 program**, please contact Nancy Iverson at 612-747-1630 or [undothree@gmail.com](mailto:undothree@gmail.com). A form was included in the March 2024 issue of *The Link*; however, if you do not have one, please contact Nancy directly.

## EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION



Nancy Iverson

I recently downloaded a copy of **United Women in Faith's Annual Report for 2023\***, titled "Inspire Influence Impact". I'll highlight for you excerpts of comments by both **President 'Anise 'Isama'u** and **General Secretary & CEO Sally Vonner**.

**Sally** wrote "No matter what may come in the days ahead, we will get through it if we, like Proverbs 4:25 says, 'Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you', supporting and being in mission with women, children, and youth for generations to come. We are influencers and inspirers! We can make an impact! Believe it!

**'Anise** wrote "Dream it, believe it, do it. These are not just words; they are the pillars of our renewed faith and determination. The dreams we carry within us are the sparks that inspire change. They are the visions of a better world for women, children, and youth. We must believe in the power of our collective action to bring these dreams to fruition. But belief alone is not enough. We must act - we must "do it" to make an impact.

From the Annual Report I'll highlight just a couple of statistics that show the impact UWFaith has had both nationally and internationally in 2023. 283 students in the US and around the world received scholarships totaling nearly \$650,000. National Mission Institutions (such as **Emma Norton Services**) were able to serve nearly 130,000 women, children, and youth through United Women in Faith grants.

I just wanted to pass these comments and figures along to you so that you can see where some of our mission money is put to use.

*\*the Annual Report can be found on the uwfaith.org website under the Menu – Who We Are – Financial.*

**Continued next column**

**Mission Today Year 2024** forms are to be completed by your units and sent to me at 16970 Whitewood Ave. Prior Lake, MN 55372 **by March 10, 2025**. Certificates will be awarded at the Spring River Valley District Meeting. Contact me with questions at [undothree@gmail.com](mailto:undothree@gmail.com) or 612-747-1630.

**Nancy Iverson,**

**RV District Education & Interpretation Coordinator**



Help keep our **district contact list** up-to-date! Each time a newsletter is returned to me by the post office for a **"NOT AT THIS ADDRESS, UNABLE TO FORWARD,"** we are charged by the post office—COSTS KEEP RISING! POSTAGE RATES JUST INCREASED IN JULY! **Pls notify me of address changes, death notices, additions, deletions, and if you can receive your newsletter via email rather than paper copy.** This helps us put more into our missions & it's a quick way to get your newsletter! Please take a moment to let me (Sharon Dougherty) know of any changes. Your help is appreciated. ([sdsrdougherty@gmail.com](mailto:sdsrdougherty@gmail.com) / 612-280-2103).

## RESOURCE MANAGER



Connie Scott

Just a reminder that all United Women in Faith resources can be found by going to [uwfaith.org/resources](http://uwfaith.org/resources). This is where you can locate:

- Podcasts
- Downloadable resources – just print and use!
- *response* magazine
- Reading Program information and catalog of books
- \*Mission u program material
- \*Daily Prayer Guide
- \*Program Resource guide



response Magazine

(\*These three purchased together as “the bundle” will save you money!)

Our unit used the weekly Missionary Birthdays found in the Daily Prayer Guide to send emails with birthday greetings along with our group picture to missionaries in 39 countries and 15 states over the past year. We have received many return emails of appreciation and newsletters from the missionaries. We have kept a notebook with the bios of each missionary which tell us of the many ways missionaries serve. Bios can be found at: [umcmmission.org/all-missionaries](http://umcmmission.org/all-missionaries).

We also use a prayer or story from the Daily Prayer Guide at each monthly unit meeting and share an article from *response* Magazine.

To find the calendar of upcoming podcasts and events go to: [uwfaith.org](http://uwfaith.org)

**Connie Scott,**

**RV District Resource Manager**

**[connielulu55@msn.com](mailto:connielulu55@msn.com) or 507-456-3073**



Daily Prayer Guide

## SOCIAL ACTION



Diana Eickelberg

**Vote, Act, Fight for Climate Change and Democracy.** . . this is the name of a webinar UWFaith held this summer.

UWFaith is encouraging everyone to get out and vote this fall as our democracy depends on all of us.

“These upcoming elections can make a difference for our future, and the future of the next generations. More than ever, we ought to vote for our values, organize, mobilize, and get more people than ever to the polls.

Let’s bring back the energy and let candidates and elected officials know that we are paying attention and that climate justice is a crucial priority they must be prepared to address. Don’t forget democracy is in our hands. Get ready to vote for climate justice and our future.”

This is UWFaith’s call to everyone to educate yourself and be vocal. All our future lives depend on our leadership.

**Vote 2024.**

**Diana Eickelberg,**

**RV District Social Action Coordinator**

**[deickelberg1@gmail.com](mailto:deickelberg1@gmail.com) or 507-358-9576**



## EMMA NORTON SERVICES (ENS):



*Ann Girres*

After years of planning, Emma Norton Services met a huge goal this spring with the opening of **Restoring Waters**. About 30 women from the former Robert Street residence moved in during April. Since then 25-30 additional residents are now at home in the new facility, so the building's 60 units are mostly occupied.

A wonderful Grand Opening celebration was held on May 14, which many United Women in Faith women were able to attend. St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter spoke along with several other local officials, representatives from Ryan Brothers (the construction company), Executive Director Tonya Brownlow, and one of the residents. Over 200 people toured the building. And, despite this rainy spring, the weather was perfect!



*Welcome to Emma Norton/Restoring Waters*



*Interesting and meaningful wall artwork to enjoy*

Now the “settling in” phase is in progress. The building offers facilities for many kinds of enrichment for the residents—exercise opportunities, cooking and nutrition classes, gardening on the rooftop, etc. These activities will unfold as the residents begin to build their new community. Meanwhile, the good work at Emma’s Place and Scattered Site housing continues.

ENS hired a volunteer coordinator this spring. Maureen (Mo) Mayberry brings youth, energy, and a willing spirit to her job. Going forward, she will be a great resource for scheduling on-site volunteer activities and coordinating the in-kind donations that the women of UWFaith have such a long and generous history of providing. You can continue, of course, to bring donations to the district meetings, but should you wish to donate anything directly, please contact Mo at [mmayberry@emmanorton.org](mailto:mmayberry@emmanorton.org) to set that up as one of the changes with the new building is that they now request that donations be dropped off by appointment. Lastly, the Capital Campaign for Restoring Waters is in its homestretch. Over \$3.25 million of the \$3.75 million goal has been raised, so any contributions that you or your unit would like to make before the end of 2024 will be greatly appreciated. Please access this link for more information: <https://emmanorton.org/restoring-waters-campaign-donation-form/>

Thank you for your continuing support of our “local” UWFaith National Mission Institute.

**Ann Girres,**  
**RV District Emma Norton Representative (Acting)**  
**[anngirres@gmail.com](mailto:anngirres@gmail.com) or 651-303-6204**



## Highlights from United Women in Faith units in our district

### OWATONNA UWFAITH'S GARDEN PARTY!

The United Women in Faith members and friends of the **Owatonna** UMC were invited by Carol Harvey to her home for a **Garden Party** on June 18. Carol has beautiful flowers in her garden that she shares for church services. We were able to see where she grows them and also enjoy a lovely lunch. This event was the perfect way to start our summer!



*Submitted by Linda Shaw, Owatonna UWFaith*



### **How Should Our Name Be Written?**

Here is the question: *Many of the women have been abbreviating United Women in Faith in both their letters to members, reports, forms, and flyers using UWF. Is this recommended? If not, what is? And when can we use an abbreviation?*

**UWFaith is the recommended and preferred abbreviation.** It is important for our name to be written in full the first time it appears somewhere, like minutes, i.e., **United Women in Faith (UWFaith)** and it should always appear fully on flyers and promotional materials.



### **BOOK REVIEW**

*Provided by  
Connie Scott,  
Lending Librarian*

#### ***The Four Winds – A Novel by Kristin Hannah***

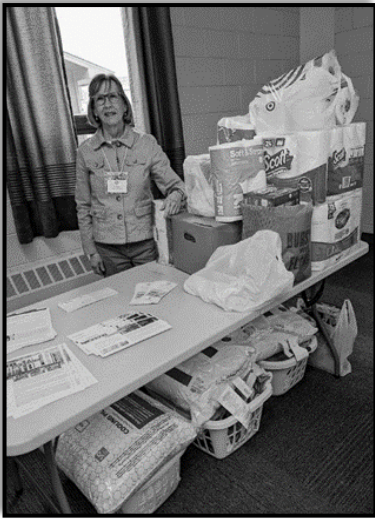
The novel begins in Texas, 1921 – a time of prosperity following the end of the Great War, until Elsa meets Rafe and the direction of her life changes. Then comes the combination of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. Hard times fall on everyone, but especially the farmers, and Elsa has an impossible decision to make as the water dries up and the crops fail. Throughout the story Elsa is dealt one hardship after another, but she never loses her courage to fight back as she continues to make personal sacrifices for the people she loves.

Elsa moves to California where she's told jobs are plentiful, but she soon learns the harsh realities of how many desperate workers are trying to get hired for the few available jobs. Once she manages to get a job she finds out how farm workers are treated by the owners – the long hours, low pay and that they are required to use the Company Store at exorbitant prices, making sure that they will always remain poor and dependent on the rich farm owners. Elsa fights back against the injustice and risks everything, including her life to bring change.

*The Four Winds* is a riveting story of the struggles and tragedies of the time, but also what hope and courage can accomplish. The author brings this period of time to life in ways our history books didn't. And it has a great romance plot as well! What more could you want in a book?

# River Valley District's **SPRING** Gathering held April 27, 2024

**THANK YOU** to everyone who made our Spring Gathering in St. Charles successful. Speakers Rev. Riva Tabelisma and Conference President Marion Hanson challenged and informed us; hosting unit leaders Teri Arnold and Dianna Pulley and their unit members provided wonderful hospitality; district officers gave support and assistance. Most importantly, thanks to everyone who attended—without you we would not have a gathering.  
**It was a great day!**



Ann Girres, acting Emma Norton Representative, gave an Emma Norton Update. Attendees donated items and paper goods which Ann delivered to EN. These generous donations are appreciated!



The St. Charles High School Concert Choir performed for us - their music filled the sanctuary with praise and energy. Later in the day would be their prom!



Marion Hansen, MN Conf President, from Sebeka (4 ½-hour drive one-way to St. Charles), was our afternoon speaker and talked with us about "Working as Sisters in God's Kin-dom".

## Theme: Moving Forward as Sisters in the Kin-dom of God



RVD President Jane Baker introduced our Keynote Speaker, Rev. Riva Tabelisma, who spoke on "Building the Kin-dom of God". Riva, the author of "Living the Kin-dom, Exploring the Lord's Prayer as a Spiritual Practice for Social Transformation" (the 2023 Mission u study), believes that God's kin-dom is built by loving our neighbor, advocating equity for all and caring for creation. She shares two versions of the Lord's Prayer with us on page 17.



The RVD Lending Library was available for all! Other display tables also included Resources, Education & Interpretation, Communications, Nominations and Emma Norton Services.



RVD Spiritual Growth Coordinator Carolyn Winslow delivered a heartwarming personal "Message of the Day".



The St. Charles United Women in Faith served a delicious lunch, plus an Emma Norton Coffee time prior to the Gathering.





# VERSIONS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

These were passed along to us by Rev. Riva Tabelisma,  
our Keynote Speaker from the April 27 RVD Spring Gathering

## Parker Palmer - Spirituality and Practice Version

*Here is a new version of the Lord's Prayer written by Parker J. Palmer. It comes from Spirituality and Practice. Lord's Prayer: Father, Mother (inspired by Matthew 6: 9-13, Luke 11: 2-4)*

Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother, holy and blessed is your true name. We pray for your reign of peace to come, we pray that your good will be done, let heaven and earth become one. Give us this day the bread we need, give it to those who have none. Let forgiveness flow like a river between us, from each one to each one. Lead us to holy innocence beyond the evil of our days - come swiftly Mother, Father, come. For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy: Forever your name is All in One. Amen.

## First Nations Version IVP: From the First Nations Version translation of the Bible ©

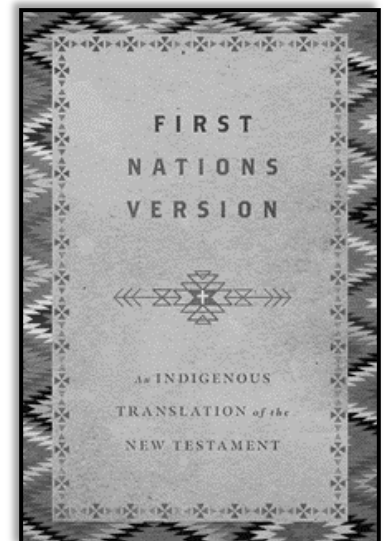
### InterVarsity Press

*We recognize that we are on the Mni Sota Makoce(Land Where The Waters Reflect The Clouds), the ancestral land of the Dakota people. Our neighborhood once was farmland for Governor Alexander Ramsey, whose goal for Minnesota was to drive the Dakota out of the state for good. Our Methodist movement was active in boarding schools designed to destroy Native culture. While we cannot undo the harm done by Ramsey, or the Methodist Church of the past or any of our ancestors, we can honor the history and gifts of indigenous people in the Americas. The First Nations Version of the Bible was translated by eleven Native American people representing fifteen different tribes. This version of The Lord's prayer comes from the First Nations Version of The Bible.*

Oh Great Father, the one who lives above us all your name is sacred and holy. Bring your good road to us where the beauty of the world above is reflected on the earth below. Provide for us day by day the elk, the buffalo, the salmon, the corn, the squash, the wild rice. All those good things we need every day to feed our families. Release us from the things we have done wrong, in the same way we release other to the things done wrong to us. Guide us away from selfish desires that tempt us to stray from your good road and rescue us from that evil one and his worthless ways. Your great road, with its great power and beauty shines like the sun to the time beyond the end of all days. Amen.



Rev. Riva Tabelisma



# September 14 RVD United Women in Faith's ANNUAL GATHERING

9:00am-2:30pm at United Methodist Church in Owatonna



See Registration form on page 19. Registration due by September 7!



## ***\*Anticipating our Future—Honoring our Past\****

### ***Our Speaker...***



**Ann Girres**

Ann first heard about and became involved with Emma Norton Services through her church (Advent UMC in Eagan) and has volunteered for over 20 years. Her church has been involved because ENS is a National Mission Institute. She served as the River Valley District Emma Norton Representative from 2016-2019. Since 2020, she has served on the Emma Norton Services Board and is currently Board president. Ann stays involved with Emma Norton because she wants to serve her community, and ENS has a mission she can support. It is almost impossible to make progress against life's challenges if one does not have a place to live first. The ENS Mission statement is: *We connect people to transformational housing, growth, and possibility—realized through their own design—in support of their journey of recovery.* Let's hear about ENS through Ann!

### **Please bring these items to help the residents at Emma Norton Services:**

- ◆ Diapers: infant-18 months, pull-ups; Baby wipes
- ◆ Household cleaning supplies: spray cleaners, disinfectant, floor cleaner, sponges, dish soap
- ◆ Feminine hygiene products
- ◆ Bath towels
- ◆ Queen bed sheets
- ◆ Paper towels
- ◆ Toilet paper
- ◆ Kleenex

***Thank you so much!***

Enjoy Emma Norton Coffee at 9:00am. Browse display tables and spend time with your friends and make new ones until the program begins at 9:45am.

Offerings for this gathering will go to UWFaith Missions and Emma Norton Services. Note: please make your checks for registration fees and offerings payable to "River Valley District UMW" (not UWFaith). Our Co-Treasurers thank you!

**DIRECTIONS TO  
OWATONNA UMC →  
815 E. University St.**

### **SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE at RVD Annual Gathering**

It is tradition at our RVD Annual Gathering to recognize the ladies who have gone on to the Kingdom of God before us. We will have a **Remembrance Service** for **all** UWFaith women who have passed away from September 2023-present. In an effort to be inclusive, we ask that you furnish the names of the deceased ladies from your church, as **all women are United Women in Faith**, whether active in a local unit or not. Please collect (now is the time to ask your church office or pastor) and bring these names with you to the Annual Gathering on September 14; also have someone come forward and be prepared to read the names aloud during the Remembrance Service. **If you're not sure who's attending or if no ladies are attending from your local unit, please email or US Postal mail the names to our Spiritual Growth Coordinator, Carolyn Winslow, by Sept. 7 at:**

**Email:** [caring@thegrovern.church](mailto:caring@thegrovern.church)

**OR**

Carolyn Winslow  
1393 Clippership Alcove  
Woodbury MN 55125



### **Coming from North 35 or South 35:**

Take the exit for US 14 east and then the exit for Austin/Owatonna, turn left and at the roundabout take the 2nd exit and go 1 mile to University St, turn left and the Owatonna UMC is about 1 block.

### **Coming from the east on Highway 14:**

Take the exit for Austin/Owatonna, turn left and at the roundabout take the 2nd exit and go 1 mile to University St, turn left and the Owatonna UMC is about 1 block.

### **Coming from the west on Highway 14:**

Take the exit for Austin/Owatonna, turn left and at the roundabout take the 2nd exit and go 1 mile to University St, turn left and the Owatonna UMC is about 1 block.



United Women in Faith

# REGISTRATION FORM



United Women in Faith

RIVER VALLEY DISTRICT UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

# Annual Gathering 2024

Saturday, September 14, 2024

9:00am-2:30pm

Registration opens at 8:45am; Emma Norton Coffee begins at 9:00am

Program starts at 9:45am

## *Anticipating our Future—Honoring our Past*

OWATONNA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

815 E. University Street—Owatonna, MN 55060

Registration fee: \$20 *Lunch included.*

**REGISTRATIONS ARE DUE BY SEPTEMBER 7.**

\*\*\*Pre-registration for each child needing care. Bring a lunch for each child.

### Two ways to register:

- **By email** to jean.krause12@gmail.com. Include information from below in your email. Payment can be made at gathering check-in. Checks to be made payable to "River Valley District UMW" (*note UMW, not UWFaith*)
- **By US Postal Service mail**, send this completed form together with check made payable to "River Valley District UMW" (*note UMW, not UWFaith*) to:  
Jean Krause  
919 S. Elm Ave.  
Owatonna MN 55060

Registration questions can be directed to Jean at 507-451-1682 or 507-363-2739.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Church Name \_\_\_\_\_ Church Location \_\_\_\_\_

### CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

( ) Local member ( ) Local officer—Specify which office \_\_\_\_\_

( ) District officer—Specify which office \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Conference officer—Specify which office \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Food allergies or dietary concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*Pre-registered only—Yes, I need child care for 1 2 3 more children. Indicate number. \_\_\_\_\_

Include children's names & ages with registration form. Include lunch/snacks/allergies list with your child.

**Children must be pre-registered to have child care on site.**



United  
Women  
in Faith

River Valley District – Minnesota  
Sharon Dougherty  
Communications Coordinator  
14150 Woodchuck Trl  
Prior Lake, MN 55372

**Address Services Requested**

**Resources for Enrichment:**

We offer many ways for you to enrich your life, live your faith and put love into action.

**<https://www.uwfaithmn.com/>** – for Events, District Connections & *The Fresh Connection*

**<https://www.facebook.com>** – Minnesota United Women in Faith

**<https://www.uwfaith.org>** – Who We Are, Resources, Get Involved, What We Do, News, Events,  
Give, Legacy Fund, Membership, Donate

**<https://www.facebook.com>** – United Women in Faith

**<https://www.youtube.com/uwomenfaith/videos>** – watch current United Women in Faith videos

**The LINK is published twice a year and is distributed free of charge.**

For **address changes or name deletions, subscription requests or to submit an article/photo**,  
please contact Sharon Dougherty, River Valley Communications Coordinator,  
at [sdsrdougherty@gmail.com](mailto:sdsrdougherty@gmail.com) or 612-280-2103.